THE HISTORY OF CIVILIZATION

EDITED BY C. K. OGDEN

23717

F 2230.1 .R3 K2
Karsten, Rafael, 1879-1956.
The civilization of the
South American Indians

The civilization of the South
American Indians

M

This book is a gift to the
Menlo School and College Library
from

GEORGE T. KEATING

LIBRARY
MENLO SCHOOL AND MENLO COLLEGE

Date Due

MAY 17 1967
MAY 19 1968
MAY 17 1971
MAY 21 1971
MAY 28 1971
MAR 27 1973
MAY 19 1078
MAY 26 1988
APR 19 '95
OCT 16 [illegible]

PRINTED IN U. S. A.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/civilizationofso0000rafa_e2f2

The History of Civilization.

Edited by C. K. Ogden, M.A.

The Civilization of the South American Indians

The History of Civilization

Edited by C. K. OGDEN, M.A.
HARRY ELMER BARNES, Ph.D., Consulting American Editor.

The volumes already published are:

*SOCIAL ORGANIZATION	W. H. R. Rivers, F.R.S.
*A THOUSAND YEARS OF THE TARTARS	Professor E. H. Parker
*THE THRESHOLD OF THE PACIFIC	Dr. C. E. Fox
THE EARTH BEFORE HISTORY	Edmond Perrier
PREHISTORIC MAN	Jacques de Morgan
LANGUAGE	Professor J. Vendryes
*HISTORY AND LITERATURE OF CHRISTIANITY	Professor P. de Labriolle
*CHINA AND EUROPE	Adolf Reichwein
*LONDON LIFE IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY	M. Dorothy George
A GEOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION TO HISTORY	Professor Lucien Febvre
*THE DAWN OF EUROPEAN CIVILIZATION	V. Gordon Childe, B.Litt.
MESOPOTAMIA: BABYLONIAN AND ASSYRIAN CIVILIZATION	Professor L. Delaporte
THE ÆGEAN CIVILIZATION	Professor Gustave Glotz
*THE PEOPLES OF ASIA	L. H. Dudley Buxton
*THE MIGRATION OF SYMBOLS	Donald A. Mackenzie
*LIFE AND WORK IN MODERN EUROPE	Professor Georges Renard
*TRAVEL AND TRAVELLERS OF THE MIDDLE AGES	Edited by Prof. A. P. Newton
*CIVILIZATION OF THE SOUTH AMERICAN INDIANS	Rafael Karsten
RACE AND HISTORY	Professor E. Pittard
FROM TRIBE TO EMPIRE	Professor A. Moret
*A HISTORY OF WITCHCRAFT	Montague Summers
*ANCIENT GREECE AT WORK	Professor G. Glotz
THE FORMATION OF THE GREEK PEOPLE	Professor A. Jardé
*THE ARYANS	V. Gordon Childe, B.Litt.
PRIMITIVE ITALY	Professor Léon Homo
ROME THE LAW-GIVER	Professor J. Declareuil
THE ROMAN SPIRIT	Professor A. Grenier

In preparation:

*LIFE AND WORK IN MEDIEVAL EUROPE (Vth-XVth Centuries)	Professor Boissonade
*A HISTORY OF MEDICINE	C. G. Cumston. M.D.
ANCIENT PERSIA AND IRANIAN CIVILIZATION	Professor C. Huart
*ANCIENT ROME AT WORK	Paul Louis

* An asterisk denotes that the volume does not form part of the French collection 'L'Évolution de l'Humanité."

A complete classified list of the SERIES *will be found at the end of this volume.*

The Civilization of the South American Indians

With Special Reference to Magic and Religion

By

RAFAEL KARSTEN, Ph.D.

Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of Finland, Helsingfors

With a Preface by
Dr. EDWARD WESTERMARCK

NEW YORK
ALFRED A. KNOPF
1926

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
BILLING AND SONS, LTD., GUILDFORD AND ESHER

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

By Dr. EDWARD WESTERMARCK

HAVING read the proofs of Dr. Karsten's book, I am asked by the Editor to say a few words by way of introducing the work to English readers. This I have great pleasure in doing, although there is certainly no need for it. I think it will be generally admitted that Dr. Karsten's book is the most important contribution to the study of certain aspects of the South American native civilization which has yet appeared.

So far as the lower forms of civilization are concerned, there are, next to sociological field-work, no other investigations so urgently needed as monographs on definite classes of social phenomena among a certain group of related tribes. Social facts are largely influenced by local conditions, by the physical environment, by the circumstances in which the people in question live, by their habits and mental characteristics; and all these factors can, of course, much more easily be taken into account when the investigation is confined to a single people, or one ethnic unit, than when it embraces a class of phenomena as existing throughout the whole uncivilized world. Dr. Karsten's book combines the merits of the field-ethnologist with those of the monographer on a larger scale. His equipment for his task is exceptional. He is a trained sociologist, and an acute and thoughtful observer. He went to South America for the express purpose of studying its native tribes. He has spent five years in close contact with savages in different parts of the continent, and learned their language. And he has carefully searched all the available literature relating to the customs and beliefs of Indians in the various parts of the vast area with which he is dealing, and has thus been able to present, and comment upon, a large mass of facts falling outside the field for his own direct inquiries and personal observation.

In the present work Dr. Karsten has mainly restricted himself to a discussion of the religious and superstitious beliefs of the Indians and of practices based upon such beliefs, and by doing so he has been in a position to discuss this particular subject with a thoroughness rarely met with in sociological monographs. Thus he has devoted some two hundred pages to customs relating to " self-decorations," such as the painting of the face and the body, the cutting or shaving of the hair, the piercing of the lips and the ears for the insertion of rings or other objects, the adorning and covering of the body with skins of animals or feathers of birds, or with necklaces, bracelets, or other " ornaments," the mutilation of the body, scarification, and tattooing. He has arrived at the conclusion that these and similar customs have not, in the first place, been practised from decorative or æsthetic motives, but have originated in religious or magical ideas still held by the natives.

In very many instances he has undoubtedly proved his case. I am glad to say that in these questions there is considerably more agreement between his opinions and my own than he himself seems to be aware of. In the fifth, rewritten edition of my *History of Human Marriage*, I have pointed out that those world-wide " self-decorative " practices may be traced to a variety of motives, including such of a superstitious nature. In one of the chapters on " Primitive Means of Attraction " I made the remark: " My research work in Morocco has convinced me that in very many cases the belief in magic forces is at the bottom of customs which have never before been traced to such a cause; and I have little doubt that in the genesis of practices which we have now discussed, superstition has played a larger part than is known at present." But I have also said that " I think it is an indisputable fact that savages, at present at least, practise ornamentation on a large scale as a sexual allurement "; that there is ample evidence that many savage mutilations, or practices connected with them, " are nowadays looked upon as ornamental, whatever may have been their original object "; that tattooing, when not restricted merely to one or a few marks with a specific meaning, " is generally considered to improve the appearance of the person subject to it," and that " we have reason to believe that in such cases it is practised with this object in view." It is quite possible that some of the statements on which these assertions are founded are merely conclusions of travellers who have possessed little insight into native psychology—unfortunately, we are only too often utterly unable to distinguish between a writer's own conjecture and the statement of a fact actually observed by him—but others are quotations from the writings of field-ethnologists belonging to a class whose exclusion from the rank of acceptable witnesses would almost mean the ruin of ethnology. I have protested against the indiscriminate dictum of Mr. Finck—quoted by Dr. Karsten with complete approval so far as the South American Indians are concerned—that the remarks of travellers regarding the addiction of savages to personal " ornamentation " are simply " the unwarranted assumptions of superficial observers, who, ignorant of the real reasons why the lower races paint, tattoo, and otherwise ' adorn ' themselves, recklessly inferred that they did it to ' make themselves beautiful.' " In Morocco, for example, although tattoo marks may be applied to make a man a good shot, or to cure a swollen knee, or to act as charms against the evil eye, more elaborate patterns, at least, are uniformly regarded as ornaments. A Berber from the interior, whom I always found to be a most reliable informant, told me (I may almost say, to my disappointment) that the large tattoo which he had on his right hand had been made when he was a boy in order to be pleasing to the women; and he added that many young men of his tribe have the right or left hand and the lower part of the forearm, as also one of their shoulders, tattooed for the same purpose, so as to find favour with the women without paying them anything. A beautifully tattooed girl is praised in their songs, and attracts many lovers who pay her well; and when given in marriage she fetches a high bride price. I refuse to admit that statements of this kind are merely " the unwarranted assumptions of superficial observers."

I have so far only spoken of existing practices and the objects they serve at present, not of their origin, which is another matter. A thing may, of course, be invented for one purpose, and afterwards used for another purpose. But, as I have pointed out in my book, however important the influence of superstition may have been, " it should be remembered that the sexual impulse is even more primitive than the belief in mysterious or supernatural forces and agents. We have, therefore, no right to assume, without direct evidence, that what is now looked upon as a sexual stimulant originally was something else; and even if it is known to have been so, it may from the beginning have been a sexual stimulant as well." Against this reasoning Dr. Karsten raises the objection that, as far as we can judge, superstition is as old as mankind, and that, at least among the Indians, " superstition is by far stronger than even the sexual impulse "; and this he considers to be " abundantly proved by the numerous cases where the Indians abstain, for longer or shorter periods, from sexual intercourse for purely superstitious reasons." This argument, however, seems to me to be entirely beside the mark. The widespread custom of refraining from sexual intercourse in certain circumstances is due to the notion that such intercourse would be accompanied with supernatural danger; but is there a single fact to show that a similar notion is connected with the self-decorative practices of savages? On the contrary, we know that such practices are frequently looked upon as prophylactics against evil influences; and for this very reason they may be favourite means of embellishment, like the use of henna, antimony, and walnut root in Muhammadan countries.

Finally, I feel tempted to add a few words in reply to what Dr. Karsten says about my views as to the origin of pubic covering and circumcision. I do not maintain that the former is, or has been, merely a sexual lure, but I have expressly pointed out that, "although the desire to be sexually attractive is probably one cause of the origin of clothing, there may be various other causes as well"; and I have quoted several facts from different parts of the world indicating that the covering of the genitals, both in men and women, serves as a protection against natural or supernatural evils. Nor do I regard circumcision as essentially ornamental "in the civilized sense of the word." What I have said is this: "The most satisfactory explanation which has been suggested for this practice is, in my opinion, that it at once makes the boy a man and gives him the appearance of sexual maturity, or that it, by giving him such an appearance, is supposed to make him a man capable of procreation. Grown-up girls would then no longer have any objection to him, and circumcision, also, might thus be regarded as a means of sexual attraction, whether intended to be so or not." But I have also mentioned cases in which circumcision has evidently something to do with the superstitious fear of sexual "uncleanness." Australian natives and Fijians consider an uncircumcised boy "unclean"; and Muhammadans regard circumcision as "cleansing," as is indicated by the Arabic term for it—in other words, by circumcision "the boy becomes clean, and capable of performing religious exercises, of praying and entering the mosque." Here, again, the differences between Dr. Karsten's views and my own are not so great as he seems to think.

I hope that the author of this book will excuse me for making these remarks, and not consider me an intruder on a field which belongs to him alone. My observations have sprung from no wish to criticize his views, and least of all his facts; but having been persuaded to write an introductory note in spite of the warning that my high appreciation of his book would have to be mixed with some controversy, I think it is pardonable if I have been anxious to prevent such misunderstanding with regard to my actual opinions as his references to me might cause. So also I may perhaps have been justified in saying some words in self-defence against the view expressed by the author, that " the whole means-of-attraction theory depends on a misunderstanding of the primitive customs relating to self-decoration."

Some marriage rites are incidentally dealt with. Regarding the mock capture of the bride and the sham fights at weddings which are known to exist among several South American tribes, as well as elsewhere, Dr. Karsten makes the interesting suggestion that they have a magical significance: the violence to which the young woman is subject during the forcible abduction will purify her and rid her of supernatural enemies, while the fast movement will further help her to escape. Although there seems to be no direct evidence for this explanation, it is plausible enough within certain limits. I have myself found reasons to believe that the sham fights at weddings in Morocco may partly have a purificatory significance, as is the case with similar fights on various other occasions (see my *Marriage Ceremonies in Morocco*); and the great speed at which bride and bridegroom are driven to and from church at German peasant weddings undoubtedly looks like a safeguard against supernatural dangers. But the suggestion in question can by no means be presumed to be —nor does it pretend to be—the complete explanation of those world-wide marriage rites. In some cases the mock capture of the bride so much resembles the genuine capture of her, which is also found in various parts of the world as a method of obtaining a wife, that we may suspect some connection between these customs. This does not imply that capture was ever the usual mode of contracting a marriage; but in a warlike tribe the capture of a woman for wife from an alien tribe may be admired as an act of bravery, and therefore playfully imitated by ordinary people at their weddings, just as in some countries the bridegroom and bride are regarded as king and queen. In most cases, however, I believe the sham fighting between the bridegroom or his party and the bride's family, or some other kind of resistance made by the latter, is a symbolic expression of their unwillingness to give up the girl or of their feeling of sexual modesty, which is particularly felt with regard to the nearest relations; while the resistance of the bride is largely due to coyness, real or assumed, as was already pointed out by Herbert Spencer as one origin of the ceremony of capture.

On the other hand, there can be no doubt that superstitious ideas essentially underlie another marriage rite mentioned by Dr. Karsten, —namely, the defloration of the bride, not by the bridegroom, but by some other man. This widespread custom has been found among various South American peoples (also including the Arawaks and the people of Cumana in the present Venezuela), among the Caribs of Cuba and the Tarahumare in modern Mexico, and, according to old Spanish writers, in Guatemala, Nicaragua, and the province of Culiacan in the new kingdom of Galicia. Dr. Karsten traces it to the idea that the defloration of the young wife is regarded as particularly fraught with danger; and this substantially agrees with my own explanation of the rite. He observes that the delicate operation is very frequently entrusted to a medicine-man, because such an individual knows how to deal with the evil spirits, and therefore knows how to deflower the girl without her being supernaturally harmed and without her husband being harmed afterwards. But more positive benefits for the bride or for the married couple may also, I think, be expected to result from the act, since sexual intercourse with a holy person is frequently held to be highly beneficial.

In two very suggestive chapters Dr. Karsten has pointed out the influence which superstition has exercised on the ornamental art of the Indians. He has tried to show that most Indian ornaments have originally had a purely practical object, being magical charms against evil spirits; that, for instance, the frequent occurrence of animal figures as ornaments is due to the common belief that spirits assume the shape of animals; and that the so-called geometrical patterns generally represent either some vital parts of the human body or the bodies of certain animals. That I am in full sympathy with the idea that people have been led to apply "ornaments" to items of their property by a desire to protect them against supernatural danger, may be gathered from my article on "The Magic Origin of Moorish Designs" and my book *Ritual and Belief in Morocco*, in which I have endeavoured to prove that the designs used in Moorish decorative art are very largely conventionalized representations, in some way or other, either of the five fingers of the hand or of an eye, and that they or their prototypes were originally used as charms against the evil eye.

The Indians believe that the supreme danger in life lies in the activity of evil-minded spirits. A leading principle in their theory of the supernatural is that animate or inanimate objects of nature which are especially filled with supernatural power are the abodes of human spirits. Thus the veneration paid to certain animals and plants, and to mountains, rocks, and stones, is intimately connected with worship of human souls. Rapids, cataracts, and cascades are haunting-places of spirits who are likewise the souls of departed men. The same is the case with the spirits inhabiting the heavenly bodies, in accordance with the belief that the disembodied souls of the dead not only take up their abodes in different natural objects on earth, but rise upwards to the sky; and similar souls are also believed to act in striking meteorological phenomena, such as thunder and lightning, the rainbow, comets, and meteors. Even the supernatural properties ascribed to stone " fetishes " and amulets are in many cases considered to have an animistic origin—that is, to be derived from the spirits who are believed to dwell in mountains, rocks, or stones. But Dr. Karsten cautiously adds: " Whether the fetish itself is thought actually to be the habitation of a spiritual being or only to possess an impersonal magical potency, is a wholly superfluous question to which the savage Indian himself probably, in most cases, could not give an exact answer. To him there is evidently no clear distinction between the personal and the impersonal, between spirit and spiritual power." This is an important admission; and it is in complete agreement with the experience I have made within my own field of research. The primary fact underlying the belief in the supernatural is the feeling of uncanniness or mystery, and the ideas as to the nature of the phenomenon which gave rise to this feeling are frequently very confused and, in fact, of secondary importance. But it is interesting to find that the notion of impersonal supernatural energy seems to be much less conspicuous, and the tendency to personify the cause of wonder greater, among the South American Indians than among the much more civilized natives of Morocco. Facts of this kind may be worth considering in the discussions on animism and preanimism, and on the priority of magic or religion.

In the chapter on "Magical Sacrifice," Dr. Karsten deals with a class " of both bloody and unbloody sacrifices and offerings, which cannot be explained as 'gifts' to a deity in the ordinary sense of the word, but are 'magical' in the sense that they are regarded as bearers of a mysterious power which is transferred to the object of the sacrificial act." To this class he refers many cases of human sacrifice, and maintains that such an explanation is radically opposed to my own theory that human sacrifice is mainly based on the idea of substitution—that when men offer the lives of their fellow-men to their gods, they do so as a rule in the hopes of thereby saving their own. But I think that our views, instead of being contradictory, really may be combined with each other. As instances of "magical sacrifice," Dr. Karsten particularly mentions "those human sacrifices which have for their object to put an end to, or to prevent, a devastating famine, and to secure an abundant crop"; and in support of this opinion he refers to such sacrifices having "the character of a magical manure, through which fertilizing power is directly imparted to the earth." It may be asked, however, Why was this particular gruesome kind of manure chosen for the purpose in question? My answer is, Presumably because human life was in danger. It should be noticed that peoples who have practised human sacrifice as an agricultural rite have also practised it with a view to averting other dangers besides starvation; this is the case, not only with the Indians of Guayaquil, according to Cieza de Leon, but with the Kandhs and the Pawnees. In the present connection I cannot help pointing out that my theory of human sacrifice does not, as Dr. Karsten maintains in his criticism of it, presuppose a belief in "angry and revengeful gods." On the contrary, I have said that "it is impossible to discover in every special case in what respect the worshippers believe the offering of a fellow-creature to be gratifying to the deity," and that "probably they have not always definite views on the subject themselves."

Dr. Karsten speaks of Indian beliefs relating to various other important subjects, such as totemism, generation and conception, the couvade, taboo, and *mana*. He thus deals with many topics which have of late been matter of much discussion among social anthropologists, and he has contributed to this discussion valuable ideas as well as facts. Even those who may not in every case accept his theories will always have something to learn from him. We hope that he will before long gratify our appetite for further results of his indefatigable and penetrating investigations among the South American Indians.

PREFACE

IN publishing this book I have first of all to thank Dr. Westermarck for his kindness to introduce me to English readers by his Introductory Note. I also take the opportunity to express my deep gratitude to him for many stimulating impulses received from his personal teaching and his works, and for the encouraging interest with which he has always followed my sociological studies. My method as a field-ethnologist, moreover, has essentially been that of Dr. Westermarck. If by this method I have attained some results in South America, this is, in part, my teacher's merit.

I also find it quite natural that in his note Dr. Westermarck has touched upon some of the questions where our views differ. That in a work of this kind, which is necessarily full of controversial matter, other anthropologists should find many points of difference in opinion and interpretation, is only what I have expected myself. As to the criticism I have passed upon some of Dr. Westermarck's theories, as far as they concern the customs of the South American Indians—as also upon the theories and interpretations of several other anthropologists—it is hardly necessary for me to emphasize that my only aim thereby has been scientific truth. I am strongly of opinion—and I know that this opinion is shared by Dr. Westermarck—that in sociological works such a criticism neither can nor should be avoided if on this new field of science progresses are to be made. *Amicus Plato, magis amica veritas.*

Speaking of the self-decorative practices treated of in my work, Dr. Westermarck states: " I am glad to say that in these questions there is considerably more agreement between his opinions and my own than he himself seems to be aware of." For my own part I should like to say that, although my general sociological view is certainly the same as that of Dr. Westermarck, it has not been possible to avoid that in many particular questions concerning South American customs and beliefs I should have arrived at different results. It may be proper to point out that it was Dr. Westermarck's chapter on " The Primitive Means of Attraction " in the earlier editions of his work on the history of marriage which induced me to pay particular attention to the Indian ornaments. During my inquiries I found, however, that in regard to the self-decorative practices of the Indians erotic motives do not play that important part that the means-of-attraction theory would make us assume. My impression is that the said theory—even as modified in the last edition of the work—does not do full justice to the powerful influence that superstition has exerted upon Indian self-decoration and art.

Similarly, for instance, in regard to human sacrifice, I cannot see how my own theory of the Peruvian sacrifices as being in essence magical, could, as Dr. Westermarck suggests, be reconciled with his own substitution theory.

With this I have only wished to point out that, as far as I can see, there is really, in certain particular points, a more or less radical disagreement between Dr. Westermarck's views and my own. Whether I have myself been able to prove my theses, of course, is another question which I must leave to the impartial and unbiassed reader to decide.

Dr. Erland Nordenskiöld, Professor of Ethnology in the High School of Gothenburg, to whom I owe much valuable practical advice with regard to my travels in South America, has also been kind enough to put his ethnological library, containing many rare books on South America, at my disposal. My debt to him for his kind assistance is not easily measured.

To Mr. Sidney Silverman my best thanks are due for kindly revising the main part of the manuscript of this book and helping me to improve its style.

R. K.

HELSINGFORS,
April, 1926.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTORY NOTE BY DR. EDWARD WESTERMARCK - - -	v
PREFACE - - - - - - - - - -	xiii

INTRODUCTION

Subject-matter of the present investigation, p. xxiii.—Different theories on the self-decoration among savages, p. xxiv *sq.*—Connection between magic and animism; Indian theory of metempsychosis, p. xxv *sq.*—The comparative method in sociology, p. xxvi *sq.*—Ethnological literature on South America, p. xxvii *sq.*—Distinction to be made between statements of facts and explanations given of these facts, p. xxix.—The culture-history school of ethnology, p. xxx *sq.*

CHAPTER I

CEREMONIAL BODY-PAINTING

Savage man's reluctance to reveal his ideas, p. 1 *sq.*—Von den Steinen's theory of body-painting, p. 2 *sq.*—Body-painting as a protection against mosquitoes, and flies, and effects of the weather, p. 3.—Natural openings of the body and uncovered parts protected with painting, p. 4 *sq.*—Blackening of the body and face as a mourning custom, p. 6 *sqq.*—Body-painting as a puberty ceremony, pp. 9-14.—Why the desire for self-decoration is strongest in savage men and women at the beginning of the age of puberty, p. 9 *sq.*—Significance of the initiation ceremonies at puberty, p. 10.—Various puberty ceremonies connected with painting, p. 10 *sqq.*—Why women are excluded from religious ceremonies, p. 14 *sqq.*—Women supposed to be less addicted to self-decoration than men in savage societies, p. 16 *sq.*—Body-painting at feasts and dances, p. 17 *sqq.*—Ceremonial character of Indian dances, p. 18 *sq.*—Body-painting at death-dances, p. 20.—Body-painting practised by sorcerers, p. 21 *sq.*—Body-painting as a protection against disease, p. 22 *sqq.*—Body-painting for visiting, p. 26 *sqq.*—Body-painting for canoeing and hunting, p. 28 *sq.*—Body-painting for war expeditions, p. 30 *sq.*—Custom of painting the dead, p. 31 *sqq.*—Eschatological ideas of the Indians, p. 33 *sqq.*—Painting supposed to protect the corpse against the evil spirits who cause decomposition, p. 36 *sq.*—Body-painting on different occasions among the Indians of Ecuador, p. 37 *sqq.*—Concluding remarks on body-painting; origin of the magical virtues ascribed to the paint, p. 39 *sqq.*

CHAPTER II

CUSTOMS RELATING TO HAIR AND NAILS, HEAD AND SKIN

Different classes of hair-custom, p. 43.—Hair-cutting as a mourning custom, p. 43 *sq.*—Cutting of the hair of girls at puberty, p. 44 *sq.*—Dr. Preuss' and Dr. Koch-Grünberg's theory on hair-cutting after a death, p. 46.—The hair as the seat of the soul, p. 46 *sq.*—Nails and skin as the seat of the soul, p. 47.—Origin of this belief, p. 48 *sq.*—Why the hair of women is cut in mourning and at puberty, p. 50.—Ideas in regard to nails, p. 50 *sqq.*—Moustaches, eyebrows, eyelashes, and pubes removed, p. 52 *sqq.*—Various hair-customs among the Chaco tribes, p. 55 *sq.*—The hair-dress of warriors among the Guaycurús, p. 56 *sq.*—Hair-dress of the Chiriguano chiefs, p. 58.—Tonsures and pig-tails, p. 59 *sq.*—Artificial flattening of the head, p. 60 *sq.*—Scalping and head-trophy-making: among the Jibaros, pp. 63-67; among the Mundrucús, p. 67 *sq.*; among the Araucanians, p. 68; among the Chaco Indians, p. 68 *sq.*—Custom of skinning slain enemies, p. 70 *sqq.*—Use of animals' skins for magical purposes, p. 72 *sqq.*

CHATPER III

FEATHER ORNAMENTS

Current theory on savage feather ornaments: feathers and plumes as trophies of the chase (Spencer, von den Steinen, Hirn), p. 75 *sq.*—Magical character of Indian feather ornaments, p. 77.—Why feather ornaments are more used by men than by women, p. 77 *sq.*—Feathers as means of conjuring evil spirits, p. 78.—Feather ornaments at feasts and dances, pp. 79-86.—Religious and magical character of Indian dances, p. 80 *sq.*—Various instances of feather ornaments used at dances, p. 81 *sqq.*—Feathers at marriage ceremonies, p. 84 *sq.*—Feathers at puberty ceremonies, p. 85.—Feathers used by sorcerers and medicine-men, p. 86 *sqq.*—Exorcism carried out by means of feathers, p. 88 *sqq.*—Magical instruments adorned with feathers, p. 90 *sqq.*—Chiefs and warriors adorned with feathers, p. 93 *sq.*—Feathers as " signs of sorrow," p. 95 *sq.*—Captives decorated with feathers previous to execution, p. 96.—Feathers applied to the body to give it strength, p. 97 *sqq.*—Feathers as " medicines," p. 100.

CHAPTER IV

EAR-, LIP-, AND NOSE-ORNAMENTS; NECKLACES, BRACELETS, ANKLETS, RATTLES, ETC.

Magical character of these ornaments, p. 102.—Ear-, lip-, and nose-ornaments used to protect critical parts of the face, p. 102 *sq.*—Magical ear-ornaments, p. 103 *sqq.*—Nose-ornaments, p. 107.—Lip-ornaments, p. 108 *sq.*—The *tembeta* of the Guaranis, p. 109 *sq.*—Magical ceremonies which mark the first employment of the face-ornaments, p. 110 *sqq.*—Piercing of the lips and the ear-lobes performed by sorcerers or medicine-men, p. 114 *sq.*—Magical necklaces, p. 116 *sqq.*—Magical stones as ornaments, p. 119 *sq.*—Magical whistles, p. 120.—Human teeth as ornaments, p. 121 *sq.*—Teeth and claws of wild animals worn as ornaments, p. 122 *sqq.*—Rattle ornaments, p. 126 *sqq.*—Why some ornaments are worn only by men, some only by women, pp. 128-130.

CHAPTER V

OTHER PERSONAL ORNAMENTS. THE COVERING OF THE BODY AND THE "SENSE OF SHAME"

Band ornaments for the arms and the legs, p. 131 *sq.*—Bands and ligatures as means of magical conjuration, p. 133 *sq.*—Magical armlets, p. 135.—Magical ligatures for girls among the Caribs and the Tupis, p. 136.—Head-coverings, veils, and frontals as protections against evil spirits, p. 138 *sq.*—Magical girdles of human hair, p. 139 *sq.*—Other magical girdles, p. 140 *sq.*—The custom of covering the genital parts, p. 141 *sq.*—The " sense of shame " unknown to the savage, p. 142 *sq.*—Provoked by the covering, p. 143 *sq.*—Genital organs in some cases covered for purely practical reasons, p. 144.—The wearing of clothes due to superstitious reasons, p. 144 *sq.*—Menstruous women attacked by evil spirits, p. 145 *sqq.*—The women made pregnant by evil spirits, p. 147.—Monstrous children and twins killed for superstitious reasons, p. 147 *sq.*—Magical garments and charms as protections for the genitals, p. 149 *sq.*—Magical waist-clothes and penis-envelopes for men, p. 150 *sqq.*

CHAPTER VI

CEREMONIAL MUTILATIONS AND KINDRED CUSTOMS

Scarifications and mutilations of the body as mourning customs, p. 153.—Current theories on the subject (Preuss, Koch-Grünberg, Tylor, Spencer), p. 153 *sq.*—Pre-animistic interpretation of mourning customs, p. 155.—Magical power of the human body due to the spirit or soul, p. 155 *sq.*—Ceremonial mutilations are in essence purification rites, p. 156.—Blood-letting and other bleeding practices have for their object to purify the body from evil spirits, p. 156 *sqq.*—Magical bleeding-instruments, p. 158 *sq.*—Arrows used at bleeding, p. 159 *sq.*—The arrow as a magical charm, p. 160.—Bleeding at drinking-feasts, p. 161 *sq.*—Bleeding at initiations, p. 162 *sq.*—Women scarified and lashed at first menstruation, p. 163 *sqq.*—Lashing, running, and wrestling as means of purification and conjuration, p. 166.—Mock capture of the bride and sham fights as magical ceremonies, p. 167 *sqq.*—Trials performed with young men at puberty: scarification, bleeding, and lashing, p. 170 *sqq.*—Initiation of chiefs and medicine-men, p. 170 *sqq.*—Sir J. G. Frazer's theory of beating or scourging as a religious or ceremonial rite, p. 174 *sq.*—Scarification of medicine-men, p. 175 *sq.*—Circumcision, p. 176 *sq.*—Magical or religious significance of circumcision, 177 *sq.*—*Jus primæ noctis*, p. 179 *sq.*—*Jus primæ noctis* among the Ijca in Colombia, p. 180 *sq.* —Why the defloration is entrusted to another person than the bridegroom, p. 181 *sq.*—Scarification and mutilation at mourning, p. 182 *sq.*—Distinction to be made between the soul of the dead and the disease- and death-demon, p. 183 *sq.*—Scarification of a widow before she is allowed to remarry, p. 184.—The *mariquarri* dance of the Arawaks, p. 184 *sqq.*—Mutilation at mourning among the Charruas, p. 186 *sq.*—Custom of tattooing, p. 188 *sq.*—Scarification of the body, origin of tattooing, p. 189.—Tattooing of girls at puberty, p. 190 *sq.*—Magical character of this practice, p. 191.—Tattooing during pregnancy, p. 192. —Tattooing practised at mourning and after the slaying of an enemy, p. 193 *sq.*—Scar-tattooing, p. 194 *sq.*—Summary: Ceremonial mutilations are essentially of a religious or magical origin, and cannot be explained as means of attracting the opposite sex, pp. 195-197.

CHAPTER VII

THE ORIGIN OF ORNAMENTAL ART

Original meaning of Indian ornaments: they either represent human figures, animals, or "geometrical" designs, p. 198.—Dr. Stolpe's theory on the origin of animal figures in ornamental art, p. 199.—Ornamental figures regarded as real decorations (Schmidt, Koch-Grünberg, von den Steinen), p. 199 *sq.*—Sir J. G. Frazer's theory of magic, p. 200 *sq.*—Connection between sympathetic magic and animism, p. 202 *sq.*—The magic of names, pp. 204-207.—The name identical with the soul, p. 207.—The name deposited in material objects, p. 207 *sq.*—The soul identical with the shadow, p. 208 *sq.*—Principles of magical conjuration: imitation one leading principle, p. 209 *sq.*—The imitation may only be partial, p. 211 *sq.*—Magic performed through figures and images which form a total representation of the original, p. 212 *sqq.*—Indian mask-dances, pp. 214-222.—Significance of mask-dances, p. 215 *sq.*—Masks of the Xingú tribes, p. 217 *sqq.*—Mask-dances of the Onas, p. 219 *sq.*—Mask-dances of the Lenguas, p. 220 *sq.*—Occasions on which mask-dances are performed, p. 221 *sq.*

CHAPTER VIII

THE ORIGIN OF ORNAMENTAL ART (*concluded*)

Ornamental patterns applied to drums, p. 223 *sq.*—Ornamented rattle-gourds, p. 224 *sq.*—Ornamented flutes and bull-roarers, p. 226.—Ornamented dancing-staffs, p. 227.—Magical significance of geometrical patterns, p. 227 *sq.*—Ornamental patterns applied to the body, p. 229 *sqq.*—Magical significance of these ornaments, p. 231 *sq.*—Ornaments applied to clothes, p. 232 *sq.*—Ornamental patterns applied to walls of houses, pp. 234-238.—Pieces of furniture decorated, p. 238.—Ornamental patterns applied to canoes and paddles, p. 238 *sq.*—Ornaments applied to pottery, pp. 240-256.—Decorated pottery of the Pueblo Indians, p. 240 *sq.*—Ceremonial "killing" of clay vessels, p. 242 *sq.*—The grave-offerings in many cases amulets, the object of which is to protect the remains of

the dead, p. 244 *sq.*—Breaking of vessels at burials, p. 246 *sq.*—Why fragments of pottery, and especially such as bear paintings, have been laid into the graves, p. 247 *sq.*—The burial jars proper have probably for their object to protect the remains of the dead against evil supernatural influences, p. 249 *sq.*—Ornamented burial baskets of the Guaraunos, p. 251.—Ornaments applied to food- and water-vessels, pp. 252-256.—Eating- and drinking-cups, and other utensils, destroyed after a death because they are infected by the death-spirit, p. 252 *sqq.*—Decorated drinking-vessels used at ceremonial drinking-feasts, p. 255 *sq.*—Indian rock-engravings, pp. 256-264.—Dr. Koch-Grünberg's theory on rock-engravings, p. 256 *sq.*—Facts bearing out their magical or religious significance, p. 258 *sq.*—Rock-engravings and paintings found at such places as are regarded as seats of spirits, p. 260 *sq.*—Figures applied to the walls of caves, p. 262.—Summary: Rock-engravings must be wholly explained from Indian superstition and belief in spirits, p. 262 *sqq.*

CHAPTER IX

INDIAN CONCEPTION OF ANIMAL SPIRITS

Such animals especially regarded as magical in which human spirits are believed to have taken up their abode, p. 265.—The belief in animal spirits among the Onas and the Araucanians, p. 266 *sq.*—Ideas about the llama or Peruvian sheep, p. 267.—Ideas about the jaguar and other animals of the feline family, pp. 267-271. —Ideas about animal spirits in Chaco: among the Tobas, p. 271 *sq.*; among the Chorotis, p. 273; among the Lenguas, p. 274; among the Guaranis, p. 275 *sq.*—Ideas about animal spirits in Bolivia, p. 276 *sq.*; in Brazil, pp. 277-281; in northern South America, pp. 281-284.—Totemism among the Goajiros and the Arawaks, p. 282 *sq.*—Ideas about animal spirits among the Indians of Ecuador, pp. 284-288. —Some animals are regarded as demoniacal and believed to bewitch people, p. 285.—Ideas about birds, p. 285 *sqq.*—Ideas about reptiles, p. 287 *sqq.*—Superstition about the boa serpent among the Caribs and the Arawaks, p. 289 *sq.*—Venomous snakes regarded as evil spirits, p. 290 *sqq.*—Ideas about fishes and insects, p. 292 *sq.*—*Kenaimas* (wizards) in animal shape among the Guiana Indians, p. 293 *sq.*—All animals believed to possess a soul which is in essence of the same kind as that animating man, p. 294 *sq.*—The Indian theory of the transmigration of souls, p. 295.—Dualistic conception of the soul among the Apapocuva-Guaranis exceptional, p. 295 *sq.*—Totemism in South America founded on the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, p. 297 *sq.*

CHAPTER X

INDIAN CONCEPTION OF PLANT SPIRITS

The worship of an Earth-mother in South America, p. 299 *sq.*—The Earth-mother of the Jibaros, p. 300 *sq.*—The Earth-mother of the Uitóto and the Uaupés Indians, p. 301 *sq.*—Animistic ideas about trees and shrubs among North American Indians, p. 302 *sq.*—Tree and plant spirits among the Jibaros, p. 303 *sq.*—Ideas about the *chonta* palm in Ecuador, p. 305 *sq.*—Personification of plants among the Uitóto and the Guiana Indians, p. 306 *sq.*—Yurupary, the " Great Spirit " of the Uaupés Indians, p. 307 *sq.*—The Yurupary myth, p. 309.—Cachimana, the " Great Spirit " of the Orinoco Indians, p. 310 *sq.*—Ideas about plant spirits among the Chaco Indians, p. 311 *sq.*—Magical character of the beer brewed from the *algaroba* fruit due to the spirit animating the tree, p. 312 *sq.*—Ideas about the manioc, p. 313 *sq.*—Ideas about garden plants among the Jibaros and the Canelos Indians, p. 314 *sq.*—Sacred drinks brewed from the manioc root, p. 315 *sq.*—Ideas about a maize spirit, p. 316 *sq.*—Worship of the Maize-mother among the ancient Peruvians, pp. 318-322.—Ideas about medical plants: the tobacco, p. 322 *sqq.*; the vine *Banisteria caapi*, p. 324 *sq.*; the bush *Datura arborea*, p. 325; the coca, p. 326.—Ideas connected with the Indian arrow-poison, p. 326 *sqq.*

CHAPTER XI

SPIRITS OF INANIMATE OBJECTS

The worship of mountains and volcanoes in ancient and modern Peru, p. 329 *sq.*—The worship of volcanoes in Eucador, p. 331 *sq.*—Mountain worship in ancient Mexico, p. 333.—Worship of mountains and other inanimate objects among the Onas, p. 333 *sq.*—Ideas about mountains and hills among the Indians of eastern Ecuador, p. 334 *sq.*—Mountain worship in Guiana, p. 335 *sq.*—The belief about men transformed into stones and about rocks that are the "ancestors" of certain tribes, p. 337 *sq.*—The worship of *huacas* in ancient Peru, pp. 338-344.—True meaning of the word *huaca*, p. 339 *sqq.*—Examination of the worship paid to different *huacas*, p. 341 *sqq.*—The places called *huacas* were looked upon as the abodes of spirits, p. 344.—The Peruvian worship of *apachitas*, pp. 344-348.—The *apachitas* were places inhabited by mysterious spirits, p. 348.—Ideas about water spirits, p. 348 *sq.*—Lagoon spirits of the Colorado Indians, p. 350.—Sea worship of the ancient Peruvians, p. 350 *sq.*—The worship of heavenly bodies: the sun worship of the Incas, p. 351 *sqq.*—Origin of sun worship in the island of Titicaca, p. 352 *sq.*—Nature of the Peruvian sun-god, p. 354 *sq.*—Worship of the moon in ancient Peru, p. 355.—Sun worship east of the Andes, p. 355 *sq.*—Worship of the Milky Way and the Pleiades in Chaco, p. 357.—Spirits active in striking meteorological phenomena regarded as disembodied souls of the departed, p. 358.—Animistic ideas about thunder, lightning, rainbow, meteors, etc., and superstitious practices connected with them, p. 359 *sqq.*—Magic power ascribed to stones: stone fetishes, p. 362 *sq.*—Worship of *chulpa*-spirits among the Quichuas and Aymará, p. 364 *sq.*—Magic power ascribed to crystals and coloured stones obtained from sacred mountains and caves, p. 365 *sq.*—Magical stones of the Colorado and the Jibaro medicine-men, p. 367 *sq.*—Sacred stone of the Jibaro women, p. 368.—Hunting charms of the Canelos Indians, p. 369.—Superstitious ideas about stones among the Chorotis, p. 370.—Magic power ascribed to the "Amazon-stones," p. 371.—Magic power ascribed to "lightning-stones," p. 372 *sq.*—Conclusions regarding Indian animism: the spiritual life which the Indian assumes in animals, plants, and inanimate objects is a projection of his own psychical life, p. 374.—Connection between animism and sympathetic magic, p. 375 *sq.*

CHAPTER XII

MAGICAL SACRIFICE

Meaning of the term "magical sacrifice," p. 377 *sq.*—Certain magical objects, "offered" to supernatural beings, have erroneously been interpreted as sacrifices, p. 378.—The so-called "grave-offerings" have, in some cases, a purely magical character, p. 379.—In South America a ritual of sacrifice is only found among the half-civilized Indians in ancient Peru and Bolivia, p. 380.—The peculiar character of the Peruvian sacrifices and offerings makes it impossible to explain them as gifts to the deities, p. 380 *sq.*—Offerings of coca and tobacco, p. 381 *sq.*—Offerings of pieces of gold and silver and figures of men and animals, p. 383.—Offerings of sea-shells to the springs, p. 383 *sqq.*—Sacrifices to the sea-god Viracocha, p. 385 *sq.*—Offerings of woollen clothes, p. 386 *sq.*—Sacrificial rites performed at the foundation of new buildings, p. 387 *sq.*—Similar sacrifices performed previous to excavations for antiquities, p. 388.—The foundation-sacrifices have for their object partly to keep off evil spirits, partly to impart strength to the new building, p. 389 *sq.*—Offerings to the earth to obtain an abundant crop, p. 390 *sq.*—Fumigations of the fields for the same purpose, p. 391 *sq.*—Animal sacrifices in ancient Peru, p. 393 *sq.*—Sir J. G. Frazer's theory on "the dying god," p. 394.—The Inca, an instance of a "divine king," the life and welfare of which was mysteriously bound up with that of his people, p. 395 *sq.*—The Inca's relation to the Virgins of the Sun, p. 396 *sq.*—Highest gods of the Peruvians, p. 397.—Why sacrifices were offered to the gods, p. 398.—Ritual of sacrifice in ancient Peru, p. 399 *sq.*—The Peruvian animal sacrifices were purely magical, having for their object to increase the power of the gods, p. 400 *sq.*—Strict prescriptions as to the colour and other qualities of the animals sacrificed, p. 401.—Human sacrifices in ancient Peru: cases in which they took place, p. 402.—Instances of human sacrifices, pp. 402-404.—Human sacrifices in Peru were in essence magical, being based on the idea of a transference of power, p. 404.—Human sacrifices which have for their object to put an end to famine and to secure an abundant crop, p. 405 *sqq*.—Human sacrifices, offered in connection with agriculture, have the character of a magical manure, p. 408.—Head-hunting to promote the growth of the crops, p. 409 *sq*.—Sacrifices of children to save or prolong the Inca's life, p. 410 *sq*.—Method of sacrificing children, p. 411 *sq*.—Why children were sacrificed, p. 413.

CHAPTER XIII

INDIAN THEORY OF GENERATION AND CONCEPTION

The Indian doctrine of metempsychosis, upon which totemism is based, is also connected with a peculiar primitive theory of generation and conception, p. 414.—Sir J. G. Frazer's conceptional theory of totemism, p. 414 *sq*.—To the savage Indian life and death are only two transitional moments in the history of the living beings, p. 416.—Fate of the soul after death, p. 416 *sq*.—The idea of reincarnation in part appears in the Indian system of name-giving; Indian children often named after animals or plants, or after their ancestors, p. 417 *sqq*.—The belief in the rebirth of the dead in their descendants, p. 420 *sqq*.—Indian idea of conception, p. 422 *sq*.—Man regarded as the bearer of the eggs, p. 423.—Ideas about a " supernatural " birth, p. 424 *sq*.—Women made pregnant by animal spirits, p. 426.—Women made pregnant by plant spirits, pp. 427-432.—The Yurupary mysteries in north-west Brazil, p. 428 *sqq*.—Festival of fertilization of the Chaco Indians and of the ancient Peruvians, p. 431 *sq*.—Phallic dances of the Kḁ́ua and the Kobéua, p. 432 *sq*.—Endocannibalic practices by which the soul of a dead person is transferred from his bodily remains to his descendants, p. 433 *sq*.—How this theory of generation and conception is apt to throw light upon the origin of totemism, p. 435.

CHAPTER XIV

THE COUVADE OR MALE CHILDBED

The diffusion of couvade in South America: the custom occurs in all parts of the continent, p. 436 *sqq*.—Couvade among the Caribs of the Antilles and the Arawaks of Guiana, p. 439 *sq*.—The rules of couvade refer not only to the father, but also to the mother, p. 441 *sq*.—Newborn children especially believed to be exposed to supernatural dangers, p. 442 *sq*.—Precautions taken with regard to the mother of the newborn, p. 443 *sq*.—Rules imposed upon the father of the child, p. 444.—The idea of the Xingú tribes, that the man is the real bearer of the eggs and the child " the little father," p. 445 *sq*.—This belief explains the intimate connection which is supposed to exist between the child and its father, p. 447.—The soul of the infant believed to follow the father, p. 448 *sq*.—Particular rules of precaution observed by the father, p. 449 *sq*.—The custom of fasting, p. 451.—Why the parents have to be careful with their diet, p. 452 *sq*.—Peculiar consequences of the father's or the mother's intemperance with regard to food, p. 453 *sq*.—Rules of diet observed by the father among the Jibaros, p. 454 *sq*.—Medicines taken by the father are supposed to benefit the child, p. 456.—By dietetic want of caution the parents are believed to harm not only their offspring, but themselves as well, p. 457.—Bleeding practised with the father of the newborn child, p. 458 *sq*.—In some cases the rules of diet are observed for months, or even for years, after the birth, p. 460.—The navel-wound of the child regarded as a dangerous source of infection, p. 461 *sq*.—The savage belief that man may evade supernatural enemies by lying hidden and keeping silence, p. 462 *sq*.—Earlier theories on the significance of couvade, p. 464.—Couvade has essentially nothing to do with prevailing system of mother- or father-right, p. 465.—The Indian not only assumes an intimate sympathy between himself and his newborn child, but believes himself to be mysteriously united with any object which is the result of his work, p. 466 *sq*.

CHAPTER XV

THE CONCEPTION OF TABOO

Definition of taboo, p. 468 *sq.*—Disease and death the most common source of taboo, p. 469.—Distinction made between " witchcraft " and " disease," p. 470 *sqq.*—How disease is believed to make persons and things taboo, p. 472 *sq.*—The taboo of death, p. 474.—Purificatory rites performed to remove the taboo of death, p. 474 *sqq.*—The taboo of death has its origin in a personal spirit or demon, p. 476 *sq.*—Distinction to be made between the ghost of the dead and the demon who caused the patient's death, p. 477 *sq.*—The said distinction illustrated by the beliefs of the Chaco tribes and the Ecuadorian Indians, p. 479 *sq.*—Taboo of religious instruments due to the death-spirits attached to them, p. 481.—Blood as a source of taboo, p. 481 *sq.*—Manslayers taboo, p. 482 *sq.*—The blood of animals taboo, p. 483 *sq.*—Purification festival *citua* of the ancient Incas, p. 484 *sqq.*—The idea of material and spiritual pollution associated with the idea of moral transgression, p. 486.—Peruvian confession, pp. 487-496.—How confession was carried out, p. 487 *sq.*—Confession in sickness, p. 489 *sq.*—Ethical element in confession, p. 490 *sq.*—Confession in ancient Peru was not only believed to benefit the sinner himself, but also aimed at the welfare of the community or state, p. 492.—The sickness of the Inca was believed to be caused by the sins of his subjects, p. 493.—Dualistic character of Peruvian religion: radical opposition between the gods and the demons, p. 493 *sq.*—Moral evils regarded in the same light as material or physical evils, p. 494.—The offences confessed were partly religious, partly social, p. 494 *sq.*—The moral and criminal law of the Incas was connected with their demonology, p. 496.—Political importance of confession in the Inca empire, p. 497.

CHAPTER XVI

THE CONCEPTION OF MANA

The term *mana* denotes an impersonal power or influence, not a personal spirit, p. 498.—Dr. Marett's theory on pre-animistic religion, p. 499 *sq.*—Refutation of Dr. Marett's " animatistic " interpretation of certain savage practices, p. 499 *sq.*—Ideas answering to the Melanesian *mana* exist in South America, but are closely connected with animism, p. 501 *sq.*—The power of *mana* made manifest with regard to fetishes, amulets, charms, and " medicines," p. 501 *sq.*—A pre-animistic stage unknown to the history of religion; the idea of a " soul " universal among the lower races of mankind, p. 503.—Origin of the idea of a soul, p. 503 *sq.*—The soul believed to possess a mysterious power or energy, p. 504 *sq.*—The constant tendency of the savage to personify the objects of his religious reverence overlooked by the advocates of the pre-animistic hypothesis, p. 505.

AUTHORITIES QUOTED - - - - - - - 506

INDEX - - - - - - - - - 517

INTRODUCTION

THE anthropological studies contained in the present work were begun during my stay among the Indians of the Argentine and Bolivian Gran Chaco in the years 1911 to 1913, and continued during a later residence among the savage or half-civilized tribes of eastern Ecuador in the years 1916 to 1919. In the course of the five years that I have thus spent in close contact with the natives in different parts of the South American continent, I have devoted attention to their material and spiritual culture in general, but especially to their religious beliefs and practices. The reader will find, throughout the work, that the conclusions at which I have arrived with regard to various customs of the Indians are to a great extent founded on my own direct inquiries and personal observation of Indian life. But, since my comparative studies cover the whole area of South America, the vast majority of ethnological facts presented in my work are naturally gathered from the writings of other travellers, the existing literature on South America being scrutinized by me as carefully as possible for information respecting native customs and beliefs.

The starting-point for my inquiries was provided by certain self-decorative practices of the Indians which, as I soon found, were closely connected with their religious or superstitious beliefs. In fact, my first intention was only to publish a monograph on Indian self-decoration and art. Questions of this kind are dealt with in the first part of the present work. My task will be to show that customs, such as the painting of the face and the body, the cutting or shaving of the hair, the piercing of the lips and the ears for the insertion of rings or other ornamental objects, the adorning and covering of the body with skins of animals, feathers of birds, or with necklaces, bracelets, and other ornaments, the wearing of masks, the mutilation of the body, as well as scarification and tattooing—that such and similar customs have not, in the first place, been practised from decorative or æsthetic motives, but form part and parcel of the practical religion of the natives.

Savage man's love of self-decoration has often been commented upon in general works on the anthropology of the lower races, but only comparatively seldom has it been recognized that certain ornaments—as, for instance, necklaces and bracelets made of coloured stones or of the teeth of wild animals—are also worn as charms and amulets. Generally the view has been taken that such things are, and have always been, merely pieces of self-decoration. Thus, for instance, Darwin, who, in his *Descent of Man*, largely deals with this question, speaks of the "passion for ornaments" displayed by savages all over the world, and seems to think that the only object of these ornaments is to make man "beautiful," and especially attractive to the opposite sex. Even Darwin thus was of opinion that savage ornaments, being means of sexual stimulation, have their principal importance in connection with the contraction of marriages.[1] The same opinion has often been expressed, both by travellers among savage races and by theoretical anthropologists. A typical instance of the superficial way in which some ethnologists have looked upon these questions is the German traveller, W. Joest, who, in an extensive monograph, often quoted in works on primitive art, has treated of tattooing, body-painting, and kindred customs among uncivilized races. Whilst admitting that such customs also have partly arisen from certain practical motives, he strongly maintains that these motives had nothing to do with religion or magic. The principal motive for body-painting, tattooing, and other self-decorative practices, Joest finds in the sexual desire, in the desire of savage men and women to make themselves attractive to the opposite sex. The theory that the primitive ornaments are, in a large measure, used as "means of attraction," or as sexual stimulants, has especially been set forth by Dr. Westermarck. In the earlier editions of his *History of Human Marriage*, he already tried to show that "men and women began to ornament, mutilate, paint, and tattoo themselves chiefly in order to make themselves attractive to the opposite sex—that they might court successfully or be courted."[2] In the last edition of his work, Dr. Westermarck has in the main kept up his view, trying to adduce fresh evidence in support of his theory. Even such customs as scarification, extraction and mutilation of teeth, circumcision, and covering of the genital parts, according to Dr. Westermarck, have largely served the purpose of attracting the

[1] Darwin, *Descent of Man*, ii. 367.

[2] Westermarck, *The History of Human Marriage*, 1901, p. 172.

opposite sex through the " beauty " these operations impart to the persons subjected to them.[1]

On the other hand, Professor Y. Hirn has tried to assign various origins to those rude manifestations of an artistic sense which meet us among savage peoples.[2] In expounding the ideas and feelings which have given rise to primitive art, he largely avails himself of ethnological sources. But not even in Professor Hirn's work is full justice done to the magical nature of primitive ornaments, and too much importance is ascribed to random theories, like those presented by Herbert Spencer, which have no real foundation in the facts of savage life. In general, the important rôle which magic has played with regard to the origin of most primitive customs has, up to recent times, been much underrated, naturally owing to our defective knowledge of the psychology of savage man.

But the subject-matter of my inquiries gradually became enlarged. The fact that magical ideas lie behind most primitive customs relating to self-decorations induced me to examine the nature of Indian magic in general, and since the supernatural power which is the essence of magic appeared to be intimately connected with animistic ideas, I was further led to inquire into Indian animism, as it refers to animals, plants, and inanimate objects of nature. Not only religious beliefs, but also certain forms of worship are involved in my investigations, since sacrifice among the Indians often has a purely magical significance. Moreover, since the belief in metempsychosis, deeply rooted in the Indian mind, appears to be closely connected with a certain primitive theory of generation and conception, I have tried to throw some light upon this theory also, notwithstanding the difficulties with which inquiries into these questions are beset. Again, the ideas which the Indians have about conception are apt to throw light upon the custom generally known under the name of "couvade," of which the classical land is South America. But, as we shall see, couvade is also connected with certain animistic ideas, which must be taken into account when we have to explain this peculiar primitive custom. Lastly, two fundamental notions in primitive religion are made the subjects of inquiry: the notion of taboo and the notion of *mana*. On the basis of the previous investigations, we may perhaps be able finally to decide whether the mysterious power behind taboo and *mana* is in any way connected with the animistic ideas of the Indians or not, and whether the " pre-animistic " theory, so much discussed in recent years, proves valid with regard to South American beliefs or must be rejected. Our inquiry into the ideas of taboo, as held by the more advanced Peruvian Indians, will at the same time throw an interesting light upon the powerful influence that religion and magic has, at a certain stage of development, exerted upon the moral views of uncivilized peoples.

---

[1] Westermarck, *The History of Human Marriage*, 1921, chapters xv. and xvi. *passim*.

[2] Hirn, *Origins of Art*, p. 217 *sqq*.

Throughout my investigations I shall also find occasion to deal with such Indian customs which are not in themselves of a religious nature, as, for instance, with Indian dances, initiations of boys and girls at puberty, initiations of warriors and medicine-men, customs observed at marriage, at the birth of a child, after a death, and so forth. Taken as a whole, my work thus deals with the most important problems of the social anthropology of South America in general.

Some words may be added respecting the method followed by me in the present work. It is the comparative sociological method, adopted especially by British students of social anthropology, with the exception only that it is applied to a limited geographical area, South America. Seldom are my investigations extended to Central or North America, and rarely to other parts of the world. The South American Indians certainly form an important part of those races of mankind which, by a generally adopted term, are called " primitive " or uncivilized. There is also every reason to believe—nay, it is even certain—that many of the ideas which will be pointed out here with reference to the natives of South America could be found among many other primitive peoples as well. For my own part, I shall, however, abstain from generalizations which, in my opinion, should be postponed until similar detailed investigations have been undertaken among uncivilized races in other parts of the world. This will not prevent me from constantly keeping in view theories set forth in general monographs, such as those mentioned above, in which the same questions are dealt with as in the present work, the more so when these theories directly touch South American customs and beliefs.

The restriction of my comparative studies to a limited area of which I have personal knowledge thus is deliberate and forms part and parcel of my method. Only by proceeding in this way, I think, is it possible to avoid the mistakes to which the comparative method is liable when it is used on a large scale—that is, applied to a study comprising savage peoples in different parts of the world, and representing different stages of culture. It has been argued, as it seems to me with much reason, that a comparative method of this kind, dealing with thousands of facts collected from most heterogeneous sources, does not make possible that careful scrutiny of authorities and of the material which is an indispensable demand of science. It is an objection of this kind to which Dr. W. Crooke, in a review of a recent anthropological work, gives expression in the following words: " As in the case of other treatises like this, dealing with comparative religion and custom, the uneasy suspicion arises that some of this material may not be worth preserving. How much of it will survive the practical test of reliability? Was a particular writer a person who had lived and worked among some tribe of the lower culture long enough to learn their language and earn their confidence? Was his position such as to give him access to the best informants? Did he understand the questions which deserve investigation; did he possess the tact necessary for such an inquiry? In short, was he a witness who, on other questions of fact, would satisfy the requirements of a court of law? The information now available is so voluminous that anthropologists will be forced to establish some organization competent to winnow the good grain from the chaff."[1]

This remark unquestionably hits a weak point in the sociological method when used on a large scale. And this is the chief reason why many of the results arrived at in comparative anthropological works must be regarded as illusory.

Now, as far as the ethnological literature on South America is concerned, it must be admitted that there are very few works presenting a material which, *taken as a whole*, will " survive the practical test of reliability," to use the words of Dr. Crooke. Most of them are written by passing travellers and untrained observers. The works which are founded on investigations, according to strictly scientific methods, we can almost count on our fingers. Such works are, for instance, Sir Everard F. Im Thurn's and Dr. W. Roth's detailed accounts of the customs and beliefs of the Guiana Indians, Bandelier's work on the Aymará of the Lake Titica, and Guevara's careful monographs on the Araucanians, which stand in the first rank in the ethnology of South America. But the method, after all, is not the most essential thing in regard to a study of the customs of primitive peoples. It is more important that the writers really *know* anything about the peoples they are describing; and that their records, be they complete or not, are trustworthy. As a matter of fact, some of our best information respecting the Indians of South America we owe to missionaries, who had no scientific training whatever, but, instead of that, possessed the invaluable advantage of a thorough knowledge of native psychology, acquired during a stay of many years or even decades, which no method in the world can make up for. Christian missionaries, such as Acosta, Arriaga, Cobo, Gumilla, Dobrizhoffer, Lozano, and recently Barbrooke Grubb, have done an immense service to science by their minute descriptions of primitive Indian customs and ceremonies which they have witnessed with their own eyes. The same may be said about early travellers like de Lery, Thevet, and Hans Staden, whose records on the Brazilian Tupi tribes are of inestimable value, all the more so as they visited these Indians at a time when they were still quite unaffected by European civilization. On the other hand, it is evident that the studies of many methodically trained modern ethnologists have proved in their results incomplete and inaccurate, owing to the too short time they have been able to stay among the natives. During a visit of a few days or weeks, or even months, it is not possible to acquire a knowledge, satisfactory from a scientific point of view, of the social life and psychology of a savage people.

---

[1] W. Crooke, in *Folk-Lore*, vol. xxxiii., No. 3, 1922, p. 324.

Yet it is clear that even writings of passing travellers who have only acquired a superficial knowledge about a certain people may contain information of some value and be used in comparative monographs, if only the facts recorded are subjected to due criticism. There are, indeed, numerous ethnological writings of this kind quoted in the present work, and, without taking them into account, it would hardly be possible to treat of the social anthropology of South America as a whole. The sociologist who only extends his studies over a limited area, part of which he personally knows, is decidedly in a better position thereby than the sociologist dealing with savage peoples at large. The former has a much better chance than the latter to subject his sources to a careful scrutiny and thus to " winnow the good seed from the chaff." Although he has not himself studied the particular tribe concerned, he will be able to judge, by his general knowledge of the race or culture area to which the tribe belongs, which statements are likely to be true and which are probably erroneous. In South America, for instance, there is to be found a great general similarity between beliefs and practices of tribes living in different parts of the continent, and there is also much probability that the ideas, underlying a certain custom found in one tribe, also underlie the same custom found in another tribe.

It must, moreover, be pointed out that, in a critical sociological treatise, it is necessary to make a distinction between a writer's statements of bare *facts*, and the *explanation* he gives of these facts. In many cases there may be no doubt as to the former, whereas the explanation perhaps only expresses the writer's personal opinion, and thus has little value from a scientific point of view. Many peculiar savage customs offer problems which cannot possibly be solved on the ground of the explanations which different travellers give of their meaning. With regard to such old customs as body-painting, tattooing, circumcision, etc., I think the problem can only be solved through a detailed study of the custom itself and the particular circumstances under which it is practised. Thus, for instance, when we are told about the Fuegians that they are "contented to be naked, but ambitious to be fine,"[1] I think this brief statement—taken from John Hawkesworth's *Account of Voyages*, a very doubtful source—is wholly without importance, since it only expresses the personal view of a superficial visitor, but does not refer to a fact. A more acute observer probably would have found that the Fuegians did not at all put on their simple ornaments out of an "ambition to be fine," but for altogether different reasons. Further, from the fact that the desire for self-decoration apparently is strongest in youth, that, for instance, tattooing of both men and women is especially performed at the age of puberty, and that dances and festivals are occasions when savages especially "adorn" themselves in various ways, the conclusion has been hastily drawn that the ornaments which the natives then take to wearing have for their object to attract the opposite sex. The conclusion is wrong because the premisses are wrong. Both the puberty ceremonies and the dances of savage peoples are judged too much from a civilized point of view, their religious character being overlooked. In regard to such subtle questions as those concerning the motives of self-decoration among savages, the mere statements of authorities, therefore, cannot as such be taken as sufficient evidence; a careful examination of the custom itself, with which a certain form of self-decoration is connected, is necessary, if we are to solve the problem.

For my own part, I have in the present work frequently offered explanations of Indian customs essentially differing from those given by the very ethnologists who have narrated these customs. I have ventured to do so in cases where my personal knowledge of native psychology and facts hitherto unknown or disregarded have convinced me that they must be explained in a different way. In general, it must be admitted that in South America even ethnologists—not to speak of common travellers—have devoted far too little attention to the spiritual aspect of Indian culture, and that many phases of it have been greatly misunderstood. Very seldom, for instance, have the religious beliefs and practices of the different tribes been made subject to a thorough investigation, and the enormous influence which magical ideas exert upon seemingly profane customs and social relationships have been overlooked. Many travellers among the Indians, indeed, if we may judge from their writings, seem to have started from the idea that the material culture of primitive peoples is the matter above everything worth studying, their spiritual culture being of secondary importance. This is an idea all the more regrettable, since not even the material culture can be properly understood without taking religious and magical beliefs into account. My own work, in which considerable attention is paid to the material side of Indian culture, may perhaps serve as a proof for this assertion.

---

[1] Westermarck, *op. cit.*, i. 497.

There is another methodological question which may be touched upon here. My chief task in this work has been to explain the customs and beliefs with which I am dealing; but the possible wanderings of these culture-phenomena have not particularly been the objects of my investigations. Every student of Indian culture knows that in South America also there are culture-elements which are especially characteristic of certain great groups of peoples, and I, moreover, fully admit that in regard to customs, beliefs, myths, and arts, the different tribes have borrowed much from each other. In a few cases, where such cultural influences are quite evident, I have drawn attention to them in my work; but this question to me is only of secondary importance. I am far from accepting the obvious exaggerations of the so-called culture-history school of modern ethnology, represented by Dr. Graebner, Father Schmidt, Dr. W. H. R. Rivers, and some other anthropologists, which methodically avoids inquiries into the psychical causes of religious and social phenomena and regards the analysis of culture-relations as the only, or at least as the chief, task of the history of civilization. On this point I fully agree with Dr. Westermarck when he states that here we have two different kinds of investigation which supplement each other, but cannot replace each other. Dr. Westermarck is also quite right when he observes that "even when the historical connection between customs found among different peoples has been well established, the real origin of the customs has not been explained thereby."[1] In the present work I have particularly studied the religious and social customs of the Indians from the psychological point of view, and I have done so with all the more reason as this aspect has generally been strangely neglected by students of Indian culture. Besides, it seems to me that the theories which certain advocates of the ethnological school have set forth as to general great "culture-centres" (*Kulturkreise*), of which the primitive South American cultures are supposed to form part, and about different stages or strata of culture (*Urkultur*, *Totemkultur*, *Zweiklassenkultur*, etc.), which in South America, as in other parts of the world, have regularly succeeded one another,[2] have the character of arbitrary constructions to such an extent that it would be a serious mistake to found any investigations concerning the social history of the Indians on them. What is the scientific value of a method which, for instance, wholly overlooks the enormous differentiating influence that purely natural conditions and racial and tribal qualities have exerted upon the customs and institutions of peoples? The fiction about different "culture-stages," with clearly marked characteristics, like those assigned by Father Schmidt, can, at least as far as South America is concerned, hardly be approved except by students who have approached ethnology and its problems from a purely theoretical point of view, but know little or nothing of real Indian life. It is also obviously impossible to make up a definite scale with regard to the different cultures which we meet in different parts of South America, and grave objections may be raised against the classification by Father Schmidt, according to which the *Urkultur*—the word taken in a general sense, to comprise the lowest peoples in the whole world—has its representatives on the Brazilian plateau, in the Chaco, and in the extreme south. Thus, an unprejudiced study yields to us the result that neither the Chaco tribes nor the Fuegians are in reality more "primitive" than the majority of the other Indians, the poorness of their material culture being only due to the natural conditions of the inhospitable countries into which they have been drifted under the pressure of a superior race. The Jaghans, and especially the Onas, of Tierra del Fuego must decidedly be ranked among the more civilized of the South American tribes still living in a state of nature—if, indeed, these natives can any longer be said to live in such a state. On the other hand, Father Schmidt seems to know nothing of such backward tribes as the Sirionos in north-eastern Bolivia, the Avishiris in Ecuador, and the Maku in north-west Brazil, who intellectually and culturally stand far below the level of even the Botocudos.[1]

---

[1] Westermarck, *op. cit.*, i. 6.

[2] Schmidt, "Kulturkreise und Kulturschichten in Südamerika," in *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, 1913, pp. 1014-1124.

Apart from these objections, I think we have no reason to lay too much stress on the method we follow in studying the culture of the lower peoples. Any method of investigation, after all, is good which conduces to our knowledge and helps us to *understand* the primitive customs and beliefs with which we are dealing. This is precisely the aim pursued by me in the present work.

---

[1] How preconceived opinions may induce an ethnologist grossly to exaggerate the " primitiveness " of an uncivilized people, is shown in a characteristic way in Father Koppers' recent book on the Fuegians (*Unter Feuerland-Indianern*, 1924).

CHAPTER I

CEREMONIAL BODY-PAINTING

THE ethnologist who is studying an Indian tribe is no doubt confronted with one of his most difficult tasks when he tries to find out the original idea underlying such customs as body-painting and tattooing. First of all, the Indian probably outdoes most other lower peoples in his natural reluctance to reveal his religious and superstitious ideas, especially such as he suspects seem strange and ridiculous to the white man. Very seldom would it occur to him to tell his white inquirer straight, for instance, that he paints and tattoos himself to ward off or purify himself from evil spirits. Moreover, we must not start from the assumption that the original ideas of these ancient customs are known to all individuals of the present generation. The savages of our own days are not " primitive " in the exact sense of the word, but have passed through a long evolution, and certainly not without considerable changes. Although the customs themselves have perhaps remained unaltered, the motives and ideas underlying them may have changed—a psychological law very potent in the history of human culture. As a matter of fact, I shall show later on that in the self-decorative practices secondary motives have largely taken the place of, or become accessory to, the original ones.

An Indian, when asked, for example, why he paints himself for certain occasions or practises tattooing, will in most cases give an evasive answer, or the explanation which he thinks looks most natural to the white man. Thus he may say—and such answers I have received myself—that he does it in order to beautify himself, or simply because it is the custom of his tribe, and because his ancestors have always done the same. But we must be careful not to accept such vague answers to direct questions as real explanations. This is rashly done by Joest, for instance, when, in his book on tattooing, he declares that during his ten years of travels in different parts of the world he has put this question to many tattooed individuals of the lower races: " Why do you practise that ? What is your idea in doing it ?" and always received the answers: " We do it to embellish ourselves," or, " We do it because it is our custom," and so forth.[1] It is surprising that a man who has travelled for ten years among uncivilized races should attach any importance to such empty statements and draw generalizing conclusions from them to the effect that body-paintings, tattooings, mutilations, etc., are usages devoid of any deeper significance, only due to coquetry and vanity, and, in some cases, a mere play. More completely, I think, primitive customs cannot be misunderstood.

In examining the customs relating to personal decoration it is not sufficient to study the painted or tattooed marks and patterns or the ornaments themselves. We must first of all know for which particular occasions the Indian paints or adorns himself in a certain way, and the ideas connected with these—that is, we must regard all manifestations of the so-called æsthetic sense of the Indians in the light thrown upon them by their other social and religious customs. It is also important to know the reasons given by the Indians themselves, but it should be borne in mind that these are in most cases secondary and not primary.

The tattooing, which is a much more elaborate operation than the painting, I shall deal with later on in connection with other scarification and bleeding practices. In this chapter I am only concerned with painting as a means of decoration, first of all with the different forms of body-painting.

Professor von den Steinen, in his book on the Xingú tribes, which will be often referred to in this investigation, discusses, among other things, the Indian custom of painting the body. He distinguishes between the practice of simply coating the body with paint and the practice of making real patterns and ornaments, and is of opinion that only the latter owes its origin to æsthetic considerations. The former has arisen from purely practical motives. Thus the native coats himself with oil paint in order to preserve the skin against the influences of the heat or to protect himself against mosquitoes and flies. For instance, he does not leave for hunting without having smeared himself with oil, especially on the breast and on the back. Likewise, when he goes out canoeing, he is painted all over the body with oil, the result being that on his return his back is covered with dead flies which are washed away in the river.[2]

---

[1] Joest, *Tätowiren, Narbenzeichnen und Körperbemalen*, p. 55.

[2] v. d. Steinen, *Unter den Naturvölkern Central-Brasiliens*, pp. 185, 186.

There is not the least reason to doubt that body-painting has occasionally served such practical purposes, and we may also agree with Professor von den Steinen when he says that in these and other respects the painting to some extent makes up to the Indian for the lack of clothes. Indeed, there are statements to the same effect from other parts of South America. Thus Dr. Krause received the same answer when he inquired about this practice among the Karayá Indians in east Brazil: the paint is the clothes of the Indians, and is of equal service to them against the mosquitoes as the clothes to the whites.[1] The same thing is said of some natives on the Orinoco,[2] in Peru,[3] and in Chile.[4] Again, Musters states of the Patagonians, that "both sexes smear their faces and occasionally their bodies with paint, the Indians alleging as the reason for using this cosmetic that it is a protection against the effects of the wind." And he adds that he himself found it equally effective against the sun.[5] Much the same is said about the Onas of Tierra del Fuego.[6]

But although it is thus certain that the Indian may occasionally use red ochre, oil, or soot as a defence against changes of weather, flies, and mosquitoes, it is equally certain that this has not been the only, and not even the strongest, motive for this practice. These natural evils are nothing compared with the supernatural enemies, the malignant spirits, which play such a dominant rôle in the imagination of the savage Indian, and which he fancies he can ward off in the same simple way as he does the visible enemies. There are, in fact, as will appear from the subsequent investigation, numerous cases of body-painting which absolutely cannot be accounted for by any of the motives alleged for this custom by Joest and von den Steinen. Indeed, from Professor von den Steinen's own book, extremely rich as it is in information, I shall gather some facts which his theories fail to explain. In Chaco I never found any single instance of paint being applied to the body or face as a means of protecting these parts against the heat or against insects. The Chaco Indian is so accustomed to the heat and to all changes of the weather that he evidently has no need of such artificial means for counteracting its effects.

---

[1] Krause, *In den Wildnissen Brasiliens*, p. 213.

[2] Chaffanjon, *L'Orénoque et le Caura*, p. 10.

[3] Grandidier, *Voyage dans l'Amérique du Sud*, p. 138.

[4] Medina, *Aborigenes de Chile*, p. 169.

[5] Musters, *At Home with the Patagonians*, p. 171.

[6] Gallardo, *Los Onas*, p. 151.

Yet body-painting is universally practised, from entirely different motives.

Examining the way in which the painted, as also the tattooed, designs are applied to the face and the body, we find that their object is evidently to protect certain natural openings of the body and uncovered parts which are particularly exposed to malign influences. The Indian, in fact, thinks that evil spirits may enter him through the mouth, the nostrils, the eyes, the ears, or attach themselves to the hair of his head. This principle will be brought out more clearly when, later on, I begin to speak of those, sometimes very grotesque, " ornaments " of rings, sticks, animals' teeth, etc., which the Indians are in the habit of inserting in the lips, the lobes of the ears, and the nose. But such critical parts are also commonly protected with paint. Rather peculiar is the Indian custom of smearing the *hair* with red ochre or some other paint for special occasions, a custom which is met with in different parts of South America from Tierra del Fuego to Guiana. Of the Fuegians Lieutenant Bove relates that they paint their hair as well as their face and body in one or many colours; but unfortunately he does not state why, or on which occasions, this is done.[1] The Abipones of Paraguay, says Dobrizhoffer, increased the frightful appearance which nature had given them by certain adscititious ornaments, one of these being to stain their hair with a purple juice or with the blood of oxen[2]—an efficacious means of giving this important part of the body's strength. In Guiana the Caribs and the Arawaks commonly practise much the same custom. The red seeds of the roucou plant (*Bixa orellana*) are mixed with oil so as to form a thick dye, with which individuals of both sexes smear their hair and head abundantly, starting from the upper part of the forehead and the ears.[3] This is, among other occasions, done by the men before marching out to battle.[4] Similarly among the Bororó of the Rio Xingú in Brazil, one of the precautions considered necessary after a death and for the proper celebration of the funeral feast is to smear the hair carefully with red paint.[1] When such hair-painting is resorted to, for instance, after a death and before going out for war, there are sufficient reasons for assuming that it is meant to serve, not any ornamental, but purely practical and magical purposes: to protect the hair, which being the seat of the soul is one of the most critical parts of the body, against the ghost of the dead, or against other evil spirits which are then especially feared.

---

[1] Bove, *Patagonia, Terra del Fuoco*, p. 129. Dr. W. Koppers, who recently has described the customs and beliefs of the Fuegians (Jahgans), among other things gives information about their body-painting, from which it appears that it has a purely ceremonial character. Koppers, *Unter Feuerland-Indianern, passim.*

[2] Dobrizhoffer, *An Account of the Abipones*, i. 115.

[3] Joest, *Ethnographisches und Verwandtes aus Guiana* (*Intern. Archiv. f. Ethnographie*, Bd. V. Supplement, Leyden, 1893), p. 80.

[4] Schomburgk, *Reisen in British-Guiana*, ii. 322.

Great care is also taken of the eyes. The eye is the organ of the most important of the senses, but also it is the most delicate point of the body, and the one most exposed to disorders. As a matter of fact, inflammations of the eyes, and even cases of total blindness, are, according to the statements of many travellers, of rather frequent occurrence in some parts of South America, the cause of this being partly the heat and the strong sunlight in the tropical regions, partly the native custom of sitting at open fires or dwelling in smoky huts. The Indian, of course, ascribes diseases of the eyes, like other diseases, to the operation of supernatural intruders. Hence, for instance, the Chaco Indians, when they paint themselves, never forget the regions round the eyes. Sometimes the whole organ is circumscribed by a red line, sometimes red and black lines are drawn only along the upper part of it on the spot normally occupied by the eyebrows, which, being regarded as dangerous, are always carefully pulled off, sometimes, especially with the women, protecting tattoo-marks are applied instead of paint, etc. The Indian view is also brought out by the custom of the Campas on the Rio Ucayali in Peru, who, before marching out for a battle, rub their eyes previously with strong pimento, as they say, in order " to get a keener sight."[2] Knowing the importance of pepper as a " disinfectant " against evil spirits and the Indian way of expressing such things, we may assume that the practice is in fact religious in character. If the sight fails in the battle, this is ascribed by the Indian to supernatural causes, and these may be counteracted by an antidote of supernatural effects.

According to the same view, the ears, the nostrils, and the mouth may likewise serve as entrances for evil spirits. Thus it is natural that the Indian, who firmly believes that he might devour disease-bringing demons with the food he eats, should be careful with so critical a part of his body. When Sr. Boggiani states that the

---

[1] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, pp. 476, 505.

[2] Grandidier, *Voyage dans l'Amérique du Sud*, p. 134.

Chamacoco Indians of the Paraguayan Chaco ascribe pulmonic diseases, headache, and other ills to malignant spirits who enter their bodies while they sleep with the mouth open,[1] he reveals an idea which is familiar to all South American Indians. Probably it is for this reason that the women among some tribes, as the Chiriguanos in Bolivia[2] and the Miranhas in Brazil,[3] *blacken* their teeth as they sometimes paint their body: the black teeth act as amulets against supernatural intruders. In such cases, however, the black paint may also be regarded as a natural protection for the teeth. Thus the Colorados of western Ecuador, who blacken their teeth by chewing the leaves of a certain plant, specially cultivated for this purpose, allege that they do this in order to preserve their teeth against decay. But it may, of course, be doubted whether this is the original idea connected with the custom. The Botocudos, besides painting their whole body black with the juice of the *genipapo* fruit, draw a black stroke from one ear to the other, passing it under the nose across the upper lip, so that it resembles a moustache,[4] as if to protect, by this magical line, all these exposed parts of the face.

Various other parts of the body are for similar reasons protected by painting. The ideas which have led to these practices will, in each case, gradually be brought out in the course of this inquiry. Now I shall proceed to examine some special occasions on which body-painting is practised by the Indians.

What is, for instance, the original motive of the almost universal custom of painting the body or the face black after a death? To say that the black colour is merely regarded as an outward sign of sorrow[5] is, of course, to give no explanation at all. This indeed may be said of the black mourning dresses used in the higher culture, but the mourning and funeral customs of civilized peoples, as we know, are only survivals of primitive rites mostly based upon certain superstitious ideas.

Among the Chaco tribes, as far as I know, only the face is painted black after the death of a member of a family, and this is more commonly practised by women than by men. Among the Tobas and the Matacos, for instance, a woman paints her face black when her father, husband, or brother dies. In a case which came under my notice a Toba woman blackened her face with soot at the same moment as her old father died. The spirit of the dead, which is always feared, is supposed to be most dangerous to the surviving relatives at the moment it leaves the body; it may enter into them and cause their death, and as women are always more exposed to such dangers than men, they have naturally to be more careful. But the spirit shuns the blackened face. Apparently the odd appearance which the soot gives the face acts as a deterrent, but probably some mysterious magical properties are also ascribed to the soot itself. Black is considered to be a more powerful means of inspiring evil demons with fear than other colours. Hence it is used in cases where there is a special danger, and most of all after a death, for the ghosts of the recently departed, or the demons who cause disease and death, are the most dreaded of all spirits. The Matacos are also wont to perform a special dance, called *nahútsak*, for some time after a death has taken place, and the men and women who take part in this dance are painted black in the way mentioned. The dance has for its object to exorcise the death-demon and to prevent it from carrying off other people, and the facial painting, which acts as a charm, naturally aids in the conjuration.

---

[1] Boggiani, *Notizie etnografiche sulla tribu del Ciamacoco* (*Atti della Societá Romana di antropologia*, vol. ii., fasc. i.), p. 73.

[2] Nordenskiöld, *Indianerleben*, p. 203.

[3] v. Martius, *Beiträge zur Ethnographie Amerika's*, i. 536.

[4] Wied-Neuwied, *Reise nach Brasilien*, ii. 11.

[5] Joest, *Tätowiren*, etc., p. 22. This is what Joest calls "Symbolik der Farbe."

Many similar instances of facial painting at mourning periods could be adduced from different parts of South America, and it cannot be doubted that the idea is always the same. Thus, among the Karayá in east Brazil, the mourners paint the whole body black with *genipapo* or red with *urucú*, the men and boys being generally painted red, the women and children black.[1] This latter distinction probably is due to the consideration that women and children are more delicate than men, and therefore have to be painted with the stronger colour to resist the spirits. Among the Indian tribes of the Rio Negro in north-west Brazil Dr. Koch-Grünberg found the same mourning customs: the whole body was painted black with *genipapo*, or red with *urucú* or *carayurú*. Thus, in a village, the day after a funeral, all inhabitants were painted red with *carayurú*, sundry strokes being crudely applied to the body and especially to the feet. Only the medicine-men, says Dr. Koch-Grünberg, who, because of their supernatural power, were not equally exposed to the evil spirits,

[1] Krause, *op. cit.*, p. 214.

did not wear this prophylactic painting.[1] The latter part of the statement probably refers to an exceptional case, for generally the medicine-men are the most painted of all, the painting helping them to conjure the spirits. The same writer, in fact, mentions another similar occasion when three sorcerers, who were performing a conjuration with their rattle gourds behind the house where the death had taken place, were hideously painted red in the face.[2] Among some other Brazilian tribes only the women paint the body black and shave off their hair. The same Indians are said to desert, out of fear, the huts where the dead have been buried.[3] The Lenguas of the Paraguayan Chaco, who also greatly fear their dead and whose burial ceremonies throughout have the aim of making them harmless, in mourning paint the face black, generally with charcoal, streaks being made to represent tear courses.[4] Among the Patagonians, Araucanians, and Puelches, according to d'Orbigny, the mourning is marked " par des vêtements sombres ou par des teintes noires, dont on barbouille le corps."[5] Similarly among the Fuegians, where all inhabitants of the village take part in the family mourning, women as well as men paint their faces and hands black or red.[6] The Guarayús in Bolivia, according to the Catholic missionary Cardús, have the following mourning customs: the relatives wash themselves with a decoction made of the bark of a tree called *ibiraa*, paint themselves black, fast one day, and make certain scarifications on the body. The idea of the face-painting as well as of the other operations is indicated by Cardús when he adds that " all this they do in order to rid themselves of the illness from which the deceased suffered, and to live healthily."[7]

How scrupulously the rules of custom with regard to body-painting after a death are observed also appears from the following statement of the Jesuit Father Gumilla, relating to the Indian tribes of Orinoco: As soon as the sick man has expired, he says, his wife and children, brothers and sisters, paint themselves black with *jagua*

[1] Koch-Grünberg, *Zwei Jahre unter den Indianern*, i. 167.

[2] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 161.

[3] v. Spix and v. Martius, *Reise in Brasilien*, i. 383. Cp. also v. Martius, *Beiträge zur Ethnographie Amerika's*, i. 393 (on the Mundrucús).

[4] Grubb, *An Unknown People in an Unknown Land*, p. 169.

[5] d'Orbigny, *L'homme Américain*, p. 94.

[6] On the Jahgans, see Bove, *Patagonia, Terra del Fuoco*, p. 138; on the Onas, see Gallardo, *Los Onas*, p. 150.

[7] Cardús, *Las misiones franciscanas*, p. 75.

from head to foot. The persons of the second degree of relationship only paint the feet and the legs, the arms, the hands, and a part of the head. The still more distant relatives only paint the feet and the hands, and apply some spots to the face.[1] Evidently it was thought that the danger for the surviving relatives was lessened with the distance in relationship, the protecting paint being therefore applied in the degree that the persons were related to the dead man. It is a matter of fact that the spirits of the dead are always supposed to be most revengeful and dangerous to the nearest relatives. But such instances also make us realize that the body-painting as a mourning custom may easily, at a higher stage of culture, dwindle into a mere outward sign of sorrow, in the same degree as the ideas which originally gave rise to it loose their hold upon the mind.

Body-painting is, moreover, practised on various other occasions, the idea being much the same as at mourning periods. First of all it is necessary to pay some attention to the *puberty ceremonies*, especially those with which girls are initiated at the attainment of sexual maturity. The corresponding initiation ceremonies of the boys I shall deal with later on, because they are usually associated with bleedings and other similar rites which do not concern us at present. Even girls are often not only painted but also, and still more commonly, tattooed or scarified at puberty. Yet the principles upon which the initiation ceremonies of the girls are based are of such fundamental importance for my chain of evidence in this and the following chapters, that it is necessary to state at once the main ideas attached to this significant epoch in the life of the Indian woman.

The advocates of the theory of erotic excitation have laid great stress upon the fact that the desire for self-decoration seems to be strongest in savage men and women at the beginning of the age of puberty, and have adduced this as an important argument to the effect that the main object of the tattooings and of other "ornaments" then assumed is to stimulate the sexual desire of the opposite sex.[2] But these conclusions are precipitate, and not justified by the facts. Before we can draw any conclusions as to the meaning of these ornaments we must have an exact knowledge of what the puberty ceremonies themselves mean to the savage. It is in nowise sufficient to say that they signify the girl's initiation into her coming sexual life; their significance is much deeper. Among the South American Indians, at least, these ceremonies in the first place have a religious character.

---

[1] Gumilla, *Historia natural de las naciones del Rio Orinoco*, i. 202.

[2] See Joest, *op. cit.*, p. 56. Westermarck, *History of Human Marriage* (1921), i. 524.

A fact which we often notice in studying primitive customs is that many savage superstitions have an underlying stratum of reality. This holds true of the puberty ceremonies also. The physiological process which causes the menstruation of women, incomprehensible as it seems to the Indian, strikes him as something extremely mysterious and must needs give rise to certain superstitious beliefs. Thus it seems to be a common idea among the Chaco Indians that this strange phenomenon is caused, or at least influenced, by the new moon. Moreover, since the menstrual periods, and especially the first menses, are as a rule connected with certain nervous disorders or other alterations in the physical condition of the woman, it is naturally thought that she is seriously exposed to evil spirits during these critical days. At the same time, of course, owing to the awakening sexual desire, the relationship between this physiological process and the other procreative functions of woman is realized. The attainment of puberty, therefore, for the Indian girl certainly means the beginning of her sexual life, but first of all it means her entrance into a very critical epoch of development during which she is often—as at childbirth and during the following menses—particularly exposed to supernatural dangers. Hence the initiation ceremonies at puberty partly have for their object a direct protection against these dangers for the time being, partly a permanent purification from the evils associated with her sexual functions during the years to come, or—to express it more plainly—to *harden* her against evil spirits. From this point of view we have to explain even such practices as tattooing and scarification of girls at puberty, as will be shown later on. This is also the true reason why they are sometimes painted or otherwise decorated on this occasion.

The delicate condition into which the process of menstruation always puts a woman, and the source of danger which she is supposed to be even to other people during the critical periods, has among most Indian peoples suggested various precautions. Among some tribes she is really held taboo and supposed to carry a dangerous pollution to everything with which she comes in contact. This idea is plainly expressed in the explanation which was given to Father Gumilla by an Indian chief on the Orinoco. For the custom of isolating the menstruous girl and making her fast, he gave the following reason: "Our ancestors had found that everything upon which a woman trod when she was in her ordinary period or lunacy dried away; and if a man put his feet upon the spot she had trodden on, they became swollen. Seeking a remedy for this evil, they ordained that a woman must fast forty days in order that her body may be rid from the poison. For in this way she dries well and is not harmful."[1] In Chaco the notion of taboo is not carried to the same extreme, as is shown, for instance, by the fact that among many tribes menstruation seems to be no hindrance to sexual intercourse. Yet similar superstitious ideas are commonly held about menstruous women. A Toba Indian gave a short and plain expression to the prevailing belief by the phrase: *Lolyak yavoh, aduottak peiyak*, "When a woman has her menstruation the evil spirits (*peiyak*) are angry with her."[2] Among all tribes the puberty of the girls is celebrated with certain religious ceremonies. The Chorotis, for example, practise a peculiar ceremonial dance, called *kau' simä*, at which the older women play the main part. The women form themselves into a ring, each holding a long staff or cane with a bunch of deer's hoofs tied at the top. These they strike on the ground, producing a hollow jangling sound and marking time to a chant. Some men, sitting inside the ring and holding rattle gourds filled with grains, or beating drums, join them in this chant. Nearly all of them have their face painted in different ways, either black with charcoal or red with *urucú*. The girl is inside the hut, reclining against the wall and silent. As long as the singing and dancing goes on she is uncovered, but as soon as the ceremonies are interrupted about midnight, her face is covered with a cloth. The dance begins at the first new moon after the appearance of menstruation, and is continued daily until the next new moon, sometimes for two successive months, and its object is to keep off and exorcise the evil spirits, the *mohsek*, who are attacking the girl and trying to enter into her. Among the Tobas the girl is initiated by much the same ceremonies as are performed for a childbed woman. The girl is secluded for four or five days, her face and the whole body must be carefully covered, especially in the evening, and she must keep to a diet. Every evening rattle gourds are shaken outside the house to keep off the evil demons, the *peiyak*, who are attacking the girl in the form of snakes. Among the Matacos, again, the evil spirits are conjured by a religious dance, performed on five successive evenings. The girl sits motionless in the middle of the ring with the head covered.[1] The Chiriguanos, as soon as the first signs of puberty show themselves, put the girl into a hammock which is pulled up near the roof of the hut. When four or five days have elapsed she is taken down, her hair is cut, and she is shut up in a part of the house where she has to pass the time till the next menses, fasting and keeping silence.[2] In this case also it is feared that the evil spirits may enter her, especially through the genitals.

---

[1] Gumilla, *op. cit.*, i. 159. See also Gilij, *Saggio di storia Americana*, ii. 133.

[2] See Karsten, *The Toba Indians of the Bolivian Gran Chaco* (*Acta Academiæ Aboënsis*. Humaniora, iv., 1923), p. 28.

From the northern parts of South America we have many reports of similar ceremonies, although as a rule they are still more elaborate. Of great interest, for instance, are the puberty ceremonies related from among the Piaroas on the Orinoco, but they cannot be described at length here. During the first days the girl is kept secluded; no woman, we are told, is allowed to see her, for in that case the evil spirit will punish her with madness or death at the next new moon. The ceremonies which follow consist in whipping the girl with cords of fish skins, in dancing and chanting, by which "the demon who wanted to enter the girl" is conjured and driven out.[3] Similar customs have prevailed among the Caribs and Arawaks of Guiana. Of the Macusis, an Arawak tribe, Schomburgk states that even during the following menses a woman always was considered impure, and had to take certain precautions. She was not allowed to bathe, nor to go in the woods, in order not to expose herself to "the amorous attacks of snakes."[4] Among the Caribs the last thing done with the girls before they were allowed to associate freely with other people was to shave their hair and *to paint them black with genipapo.*[5] This latter custom, to paint the girls black at puberty, Dr. Koch-Grünberg also found prevailing among the Indian tribes of north-west Brazil. Thus at Rio Aiary, at the first menstruation, the girl's hair was cut short by her mother, and her back coated black with *genipapo.*[6]

---

[1] See Karsten, *Indian Dances in the Gran Chaco* (*Öfversigt af Finska Vetenskaps-Societetens Förhandlingar*, Bd. LVII., 1914-1915. Afd. B., No. 6), p. 25 *sqq.*

[2] Domenico del Campana, *Notizie intorno ai Ciriguani* (*Archivio per l'antropologia e la etnologia*, 1902), p. 85.

[3] Chaffanjon, *L'Orénoque et le Caura*, p. 214.

[4] Schomburgk, *Reisen in British-Guiana*, ii. 316.

[5] Lafitau, *Mœurs des sauvages Amériquains*, i. 292.

[6] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 181.

The same custom was practised among the Uanána on the Rio Caiary.[1] Likewise among some tribes in Venezuela, when a girl is to be initiated she is taken outside the hut and seated upon a footstool, naked down to the waist, whereupon her body is painted with *onoto*. The ceremony is completed by lashing the girl with whips.[2] It is hardly necessary to observe that in such cases the painting cannot possibly be any " ornament " in the proper sense of the word, nor a direct means of sexual stimulation. The *genipapo*, applied crudely to the back, is certainly not regarded as beautiful by the Indians themselves. It is a simple means of " disinfecting " the impure girl by the strong liquid. The black colour, which remains for many days, at the same time serves as a charm or a prophylactic against the invisible enemies. This principle will presently be brought out more clearly with regard to some other cases of body-painting.

With more reason the face-paintings of the Toba girls could be interpreted as a means of sexually stimulating the men. These paintings, as far as I know, are not practised at the first menstruation because of the custom of secluding the girl and covering her head and body with clothes. However, at various times the Toba women, who in our days do not tattoo themselves, appeared richly painted in the face with the red *urucú*. When I inquired as to the reason for this, I sometimes simply received the answer that it was considered beautiful, sometimes that it was done to attract the men. The girls paint themselves, I was told, when they are desirous of a man. Yet it was perfectly clear that this cannot have been the only motive, for the facial painting was not practised only by unmarried girls, but also by young married women, who ought not to have had any reason to put on such an outward sign for the men. As a matter of fact, the truth appeared to be that the Toba women generally paint themselves *at the time of their menses*—no doubt as a prophylactic against the evil spirits whose feared attacks also make them diet during the four or five critical days. But since sexual desire with the Indian woman is greatest during the days of her menstrual period, we can understand how this desire has, in the case of unmarried girls, come to act as a secondary motive for face-painting.[3] Thus the facial painting of the Toba women gives one instance of the numerous ways in which secondary motives may arise in the evolution of customs, and at the same time shows us how necessary it is to examine carefully the facts before we draw our conclusions.

---

[1] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, ii. 64. Cp. v. Martius, *Beiträge zur Ethnographie Amerika's*, i. 589.

[2] Arvelo, *Vida indiana*, p. 173.

[3] Among most Chaco tribes, a girl, after she has had her first menstruation, is allowed to have free sexual intercourse with any unmarried man until she chooses a husband for life.

A young Toba woman at the same critical epoch appeared with two arrow-heads painted on each cheek; and another had, likewise on the cheeks, ornaments which evidently signified the teeth of some wild animal. When we know the part arrows and teeth of animals play as charms among the Indians, we cannot have much doubt as to the magical significance of these ornaments.

The ideas pointed out are of special interest because they help us to understand, not only many so-called decorative customs among the Indian women, but also some peculiar facts relating to their social position. It is a fact often noticed and commented upon by travellers in South America that the women as a rule play a very subordinate rôle in all religious feasts and ceremonies.[1] Thus the Indian dances in general seem to be meant more for the men than for the women, and in certain dances, which professedly have the character of magical conjurations, the latter are not allowed to take part at all. The mask-dances, for instance, are generally considered to be so dangerous for women—as also for children—that by merely looking at the masks they might die on the spot. Likewise, they are strictly forbidden to see some other religious instruments, such as the flutes and bull-roarers used by many Brazilian tribes. They may never enter the " men-houses " or " flute-houses " where the religious instruments are kept and the secret ceremonies are performed; any infringement of these rules would prove fatal to them. Such facts have greatly puzzled some writers, but they have never been satisfactorily explained. Yet, I think, the reason for these restrictions is quite simple. The " men-houses " or " flute-houses " are sanctuaries where important religious ceremonies and conjurations take place. The persons who take part in these must be specially initiated, or—to use the expression which seems to me to be more to the point

---

[1] It must, however, be observed that there are exceptions to this rule. Thus, as we have just seen, the older women play the main part at the ceremonies which are performed with girls at puberty among some Chaco tribes. Similarly, among such tribes that are scalp- or head-hunters, the women take an active part in the dances and other conjurations, with which these trophies are initiated. See Karsten, *Blood Revenge, War, and Victory Feasts among the Jibaro Indians of Eastern Ecuador*, *passim* ; Friederici, *Skalpieren und ähnliche Kriegsgebräuche in Amerika*, p. 113. This is evidently due to the fact that the ends for which such ceremonies are performed practically concern the women. See Karsten, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

—hardened against the evil spirits with whom the conjurers have to enter into intimate contact. This initiation or hardening is carried out through special ceremonies performed by the sorcerers. On the other hand, the uninitiated—namely, children who always are delicate, and women who, owing to the natural processes they are subject to, are considered to have little power of resistance against the evil demons—are excluded from these mysteries. According to principles which will be put forward in detail later on, the religious instruments, —masks, flutes, bull-roarers, etc.—are believed to contain the spirits who, by the conjuration, have been compelled to enter them. These spirits will invade any woman who merely—even were it only by accident—looks upon them, and the consequences will prove fatal not only to her, but perhaps to other women as well.

It is true that among many tribes in South America there exist female sorcerers also, who are able to conjure demons like their male colleagues. But these women are, I think, invariably of an advanced age, and have already passed the critical periods in a woman's life. Old women are among the Indians much like men, and are almost regarded as men. Yet it seems that the female sorcerers have to undergo a harder trial in order to be initiated into their profession than male sorcerers.

In Chaco the " men-houses " or " club-houses " are not real houses, but open places, usually under a shadowy algaroba tree. Although they are not considered so dangerous as the " flute-houses " among the Brazilian Indians, yet women never enter these places and never take part in the drinking-feasts held there. The reason for this, it seems to me, is that the drinking of algaroba-beer and other intoxicating liquors originally has been, as it still often is, a purely religious ceremony, a sort of conjuration, in which women must not take part.[1]

Many of the points which I have here merely touched upon in passing I shall find occasion to discuss at some length in the course of the inquiries which follow.

My thesis that women are considered to be more delicate and more exposed to evil spirits than men, and the other thesis that most ornaments have originally been nothing but prophylactics against these supernatural powers, seem not to be quite consistent with the supposed fact that among the Indians the men generally decorate themselves much more than the women. This has indeed often been pointed out as being the rule among savage peoples at large. Thus even Darwin, discussing savage man's love of self-decoration, emphasizes that " in most, but not in all, parts of the world the men are more ornamented than the women and often in a different manner," and he also tries to account for this fact. " As the women," he says, " are made by savages to perform the greatest share of the work, and as they are not allowed to eat the best kinds of food, so it accords with the characteristic selfishness of man that they should not be allowed to obtain or use the finest ornaments."[1] I think Darwin here somewhat exaggerates both the " selfishness " of savage man in relation to the weaker sex, and the subordinate position of woman in primitive societies. Likewise, the assertion that at the lower stages of culture the men as a rule ornament themselves more than the women involves some exaggeration. In South America certain modes of self-decoration, as body-painting and tattooing, are decidedly more common among women than among men. At least this is so in Chaco. Thus, among the Tobas, the men comparatively seldom paint themselves in the face, or almost only for religious dances and conjurations; on the other hand, the younger women not only paint themselves for dances, but also for some special occasions, for instance, at their menstrual periods, as already pointed out. The same seems to hold good of the Chiriguanos in Bolivia, and of the Cainguá, another Guarani tribe on the upper Paraná in Misiones. Of the latter Dr. Ambrosetti says that they are in the habit of painting their face in various colours; but this, he adds, is done mostly by the women; men seldom paint their faces.[2] Exactly the same may be said of tattooing, which among nearly all Chaco tribes is confined to the women. The Ashluslays on the lower Rio Pilcomayo tattoo the girls at puberty, but never the boys. The Argentine Tobas, on the right bank of the same river, also practise tattooing, but it is likewise confined to the women. Only in some rare cases it may happen that a young man, who is considered in some way abnormal or feminine in his manners, is tattooed by his comrades.[3] Similarly among the

---

[1] Old women, however, form an exception to this rule for the reasons already given. They not only occasionally drink algaroba-beer and other intoxicants, but also smoke tobacco, a practice which also is, or has been, intimately connected with the magical conjurations. The old women are no more real women, and may, therefore, take part in such mysteries or indulge in habits which are considered unwomanly.

[1] Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, ii. 372.

[2] Ambrosetti, *Los Indios Caingua del alto Paraná*, p. 49.

[3] Lehmann-Nitsche, *Les Indiens Takshik*, p. 16. Campos, *De Tarija a la Asuncion*, p. 255.

ancient Guaranis of Paraguay, only the girls used to tattoo themselves in the face at puberty.[1] Among the Chorotis of the Bolivian Chaco tattooing is the rule for women, although men also sometimes practise this custom. In most other parts of South America both sexes seem to practise tattooing, but on the whole it is more common among women than among men.

When it has been asserted that among the Indians men are more addicted to self-decoration than women, especially one important class of ornament has been thought of, namely, the feather ornaments which, as a matter of fact, are everywhere in South America more used by the masculine sex. But this is due to special reasons which I shall mention in a following chapter, and which do not contradict my general thesis that women are considered to be more delicate and more in danger of evil spirits than men, and therefore are, on the whole, in greater need of prophylactic " ornaments" against them.

It is unfortunate that some writers on Indian customs, who have taken too narrow a view of the subject, have confined themselves merely to describing the way in which men and women decorate themselves, but have not deemed necessary to inquire *why* this was done, nor on what occasions the ornaments were used. Yet it is highly probable that, for instance, many peculiar practices relating to body-painting among Indian women have their origin in the ideas and considerations pointed out in these pages. Thus, when we hear that among the Sinsis of Peru the women paint on their body two lines which are drawn from the shoulders over each breast down to the ventral parts, and that among the Tirras in the same land the women paint a sort of girdle round the waist in black colour, and three similar black bindlets on each thigh which are never removed,[2] we cannot have much doubt as to the idea of this peculiar " decoration." The breasts and the venter of the women are critical parts which must be protected by such magical means where the natural covering with clothes is not practised.

Other important occasions on which the Indians adorn themselves in various ways are the *feasts* and *dances*. That in these facial painting is used as one of the commonest kinds of ornaments is so well known that it is hardly necessary to illustrate the fact with examples. Yet some general words may be said as to the meaning of the Indian dances. On this point it must be borne in mind that

[1] Azara, *Descripción e Historia del Paraguay*, i. 184.

[2] v. Tschudi, *Peru. Reiseskizzen*, ii. 228.

dances among savages on the whole have a very different character from what they have among civilized peoples. They are generally no amusement, but a serious ceremonial performance. Although some South American tribes are supposed to know purely profane dances also, there are strong reasons for assuming that all Indian dances have been purely religious or magical in their origin, the primary ideas having in some cases been forgotten. This assertion is difficult to prove, because hitherto very little attention has been paid to the dances of the South American Indians by students of their customs. The data given on this point, however, are apt to confirm the view I have taken as to their true nature. Among the Ecuadorian Indians, whom I visited during my last journey in South America, profane dances are entirely unknown; all dances among these tribes have a purely magical character, being a sort of conjuration, and there is little doubt that this holds true of the Indian dances in the whole Amazonian territory. Accordingly, it is easy to find that all ornaments which are put on for these occasions have likewise a magical significance. In the Gran Chaco, where I had an opportunity of studying dances among several tribes, I made the same observation. Thus the Tobas have three dances, all of which appear to be of religious origin. The Indians firmly believe that by certain movements of the body, as well as through the chants which accompany these movements, they can conjure evil spirits. It is true that the religious or magical idea is not conspicuous in all dances, and the commonest of the Toba dances, the *nahotti*, is sometimes apparently practised as a mere amusement. Yet the very name of this dance (*nahotti*, from *nahot*, " evil spirit ") clearly reveals its origin as a magical conjuration. As such it especially appears when it is performed to cure sick people by driving out the disease-demons who have taken possession of them. The dancers then form a ring round the patient, and start to jump up and down with both feet at once, chanting loudly and marking time with rattles and bells which are held in the hands. Most of them are painted red in the face with *urucú*.

The Chorotis in the Bolivian Chaco have been mentioned as an instance of Indians who have purely profane dances. Their feasts and dances are said to be mere amusements and to have especia reference to sexual life.[1] On these occasions the men paint themselves richly in the face and put on grand ostrich plumes, as well as other ornaments which are supposed to please and attract the girls. Yet, it seems to me, the religious origin of these dances is still conspicuous. It must be considered that the sexual life, and especially courtship and marriage, is among the Indians often closely connected with religious ideas. Thus the marriage-dance, *avusje*, although to a superficial onlooker it seems like a mere play, has in fact a magical significance. The girls, who have to make choice of a husband, stand in the middle of the ring, the young men dancing around them, chanting loudly. This is called *nissammaha aséhne*, " to hurry on the girls." When we know what the Chorotis mean by this expression, which is often used in similar cases, we understand that the meaning of the ceremony cannot be but to avert supernatural dangers from the girls on this important occasion when they are making a choice for life.[1] Two other of the Choroti dances, the *ahlénta* and the *jóhloki*, at which the men are in like manner painted and decorated, are performed especially during the season when the algaroba and most other fruits reach maturity and the Chaco Indians are living a happy and joyous life. During these dances all fruits are collected into the house of an old man, and it is believed that *the dances will make them abundant*—not only the fruits collected there, but all fruits in the forest. It would be out of place here to discuss at length the particular ideas on which this belief seems to be founded, and which probably are no longer known to the Indians themselves. It is sufficient to point out that, in many other parts of South America also, dances and feasts are held at harvest-time which clearly have a religious or magical character. In Brazil and the northern parts of South America they are professedly performed to propitiate the spirits which are believed to animate certain plants and bring the fruits to maturity.[2] With the Choroti dances just mentioned we may compare the *kyaiya* of the Paraguayan Lenguas, described by Mr. Grubb. This feast was, likewise, held to celebrate the gathering-in of the main crops,[1] and its religious origin is plainly brought out by the particular ceremonies with which it was connected, but the real meaning of which was no longer remembered.[2]

---

[1] Nordenskiöld, *De sydamerikanska Indianernas kulturhistoria*, p. 145.

---

[1] From the same point of view, I think, we have to explain the facial painting of young Indians at courtship, even independently of dances. The Mataco man, for instance, paints himself with red, blue, and black colours when he is courting a girl (Baldrich, *Las comarcas virgenes*, p. 232); and the Ona man, on the same occasion, paints himself with small white spots in the face (Gallardo, *Los Onas*, p. 151). Courtship is a critical occasion for the young man, which makes it necessary for him to protect himself against evil influences, and thus secure good luck. But it is easy psychologically to understand that such an ornament makes a good impression upon the girls, and that thus it may secondarily act as a means of attraction. That, however, it is essentially no real ornament, is indicated also by the fact that after marriage the Ona man changes the white spots in the face for black ones (Gallardo, *loc. cit.*).

[2] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 189.

The hypothesis seems more than probable that, on such occasions, body-painting has originally been used as a charm against the demons with whom the dancers came in contact during the conjuration; since, however, in course of time the original idea has been forgotten whereas the custom itself has been preserved, secondary motives have been developed which have transformed the charm into a mere ornament or a means of attracting the opposite sex. But such cases are probably comparatively rare. For the most part, no doubt, the Indians are still quite aware of the true ideas underlying their dances, and these are, as a matter of fact, particularly performed on occasions which have professedly a religious character, such as at childbirth and name-giving, at betrothal and marriage, at the puberty of boys and girls, and after a death. The death-dances and the ornamental painting assumed for them are especially significant. From Chaco I have already mentioned such an instance relating to the Matacos. In like manner, among the Indians of the Rio Negro in Brazil, after a death had taken place and the dead had been buried, a big feast with much dancing and *kaschiri*-drinking was arranged, which lasted for about five days. When the guests arrived to this feast the women and the girls of the house painted beautiful patterns upon their bodies with the black juice of the *genipapo*. Some other guests at first rubbed the red of the *carayurú* well into the skin and afterwards coated the whole body, with the exception of the face, crudely with *genipapo*. Every dancer painted red patterns on his own face with the aid of a small mirror.[3] Just as in this case the dancing and the excessive beer-drinking were no amusements but first of all had a practical aim, so the thorough and painstaking body-painting certainly was no decoration proper. We are here simply dealing with different precautional measures taken to protect the survivors against the revengeful spirits of the dead.

---

[1] Grubb, *An Unknown People in an Unknown Land*, p. 178.

[2] As to the religious and magical dances in the Gran Chaco, see more fully Karsten, *Indian Dances in the Gran Chaco* (*op. cit.*), *passim*.

[3] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 174, 178.

I mentioned that the Tobas in Chaco among other things practise facial painting at the dance which is performed to cure sick people by conjuring the disease-demon. This, as a matter of fact, is the rule in all South America. It is, indeed, one of the strongest evidences in support of the theory here set forth with regard to the origin of self-decoration that exorcisms and conjurations—be they connected with dancing or not—are occasions on which the Indians most of all paint and adorn themselves, and that the sorcerers often are the most adorned of all. In so far as their ornaments consist of feathers and plumes, as is frequently the case, I shall come back to this question in the third chapter. For the moment we are only concerned with the custom of painting the body.

The Chaco tribes, on the whole, practise body-painting much less than the Indians in the northern parts of South America. Yet, for instance, among the Tobas the usual thing was that a medicine-man, before he went to exercise his profession, applied some black or red spots with soot or *urucú* to his cheeks. Among the Chamacoco in Paraguay, the sorcerers, according to Sr. Boggiani, used to decorate themselves more than other people, one of their ornaments being red ochre richly applied to the face.[1] Likewise, the Patagonian sorcerer who was called for to perform the ceremonies by which a girl was initiated at puberty had to prepare himself by, amongst other things, adorning himself with white paint; and at the dance held in the evening in honour of the girl, four sorcerers appeared adorned with white paint daubed all over their bodies.[2] Still more strange was the ornamental outfit of the Jahgan medicine-man when he proceeded to carry out the exorcism: his head was covered with ashes and mud, his face and his body painted in various colours, and he was, moreover, adorned with plumes of sea-birds.[3] In fact, it will probably be agreed by everybody that in such cases any decoration theory falls short. Evidently there is the idea that the odd painting partly will serve as a charm to protect the medicine-man himself during the dangerous contact with the demon to be conjured, and partly will actively aid in this conjuration by inspiring the evil demon with terror.

From the tropical parts of South America many similar instances could be given. Thus, among the tribes of the Rio Negro, Dr. Koch-

---

[1] Boggiani, *Compendio de etnografia Paraguaya*, p. 110. Cp. also, on the Payaguas, Azara, *Voyages dans l'Amérique méridionale*, ii. 139.

[2] Musters, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

[3] Bove, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

Grünberg sometimes found the sorcerers hideously painted red in the face when they were engaged in their profession, whether they had to cure sick people or to perform the conjurations considered necessary after a death.[1] At Rio Xingú Professor von den Steinen witnessed a nightly ceremony performed to conjure a meteor, the sudden appearance of which had terrified the Indians. Two *baris* (medicine-men), smeared all over the body with bright-red *urucú*, tried to drive away the demon by vehement gesticulations and by throwing spittle up into the air.[2] Professor von den Steinen does not account for the painting in this case, but probably will agree that it can have been neither an ordinary decoration nor a protection against mosquitoes or flies.

Equally obvious is the magical character of body-painting which is applied as a direct means of protection against diseases, a custom which is known to be practised among savage peoples in many different parts of the world.[3] Dr. Koch-Grünberg mentions some significant instances of this nature from among the tribes of the Rio Negro. Thus, when in a Siusi village one of the men had fallen ill with a pulmonary inflammation and another with a catarrh, all inhabitants of the village coated their bodies with the red *carayurú*, believing that the paint would protect them against the epidemic. The chief himself was found carefully painting himself as well as his father and brother " in order to keep off the disease." Small children, who are especially liable to fall ill and die, as well as the people that lived in the same house as the pulmonary patient, and therefore were more endangered than the rest, kept this prophylactic painting for a long time and had it renewed every day.[4] Similarly among the Kobéua the women used to paint their babes on every occasion, " partly with the red of the *urucú* as an ornament, partly with the purple red of the *carayurú* as a prophylactic against the evil catarrh and other diseases."[5] What this distinction in the use of the *urucú* and the *carayurú* was due to, Dr. Koch-Grünberg does not explain, and the suspicion is difficult to resist that the *urucú*-painting also was simply a prophylactic against disease. Small breast-feeding children hardly need any real ornaments, but charms against evil supernatural influences they need all the more. The custom of painting newborn children is reported from some other Brazilian tribes too. Thus, among the ancient Tupis, as soon as the child was born, the father painted it in black and red colours.[1] Von Spix and von Martius, speaking of the Coroado Indians of R. Xipoto, say that "even sucklings were painted with red and black-blue lines and spots, especially in the face."[2] In the same way among the Karayá, the newborn child is smeared over with the red *urucú*.[3]

---

[1] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 161, 334.

[2] v. d. Steinen, *Unter den Indianern Central-Brasiliens*, p. 514.

[3] See Bartels, *Medizin der Naturvölker*, p. 196 *sqq.*

[4] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 158.

[5] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, ii. 150. Cp. ii. 85.

Again, the Lenguas of Paraguay have a habit of rubbing the knees and ankles of their children with the grease of the ant-bear and the ring-tailed bear. "This they do," Mr. Grubb says, "in order to make their legs strong." The same missionary states that "at various periods they make paint marks upon their bodies unconnected with mere ornamentation," and that "these marks have reference to physical conditions."[4] The latter laconic explanation seems to imply that the paint marks were charms against diseases—that is, against evil spirits. As to children, we frequently notice the anxious care with which Indian parents try to protect, in various ways, their newborn offspring, who, owing to their delicate condition, are supposed to be in great danger of supernatural enemies.

The Indians of Orinoco, according to the Father Gumilla, used to smear their whole body from the top of their head to the feet with a certain oil, and the mothers, at the same time as they anointed themselves, also anointed their children, even their sucking babies, at least twice a day. This anointment was regarded as an equivalent to clothes, and was especially resorted to for feasts, for visits, for fishing expeditions, and for other important undertakings. Upon the anointment they, on certain occasions, painted various designs in different colours, and arranged their plumes and other ornaments.[5] The Father adds that the oil gave the natives some protection against the mosquitoes and against the hot sun, but this cannot have been their only motive for using it. The fact that even babies at the breast were anointed with it, as well as other circumstances, makes it almost certain that some magical virtues were ascribed to it, and that it was believed to act as a prophylactic charm against evil supernatural influences.

[1] Lery, *Histoire d'un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil*, etc., p. 297. Southey, *History of Brazil*, i. 238.

[2] v. Spix and v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 368.

[3] Ehrenreich, *Beiträge zur Völkerkunde Brasiliens*, p. 29.

[4] Grubb, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

[5] Gumilla, *op. cit.*, i. 123.

Passing on to the western parts of South America, we hear that the Indians in ancient Peru were in the habit of smearing their bodies over with maize and some other things, using this also as a means of curing people from illnesses. " With the *llimpi*, which is the metal of mercury, they used to smear themselves, as well as with coloured earth at the time of their feasts or for other purposes, in connection with some ceremonies and superstitions."[1] The supernatural purifying effects ascribed to the mercury evidently depended upon the poisonous qualities of this metal. Of special interest is the sacred paste, prepared of mashed maize, which played such an important part at certain feasts of the ancient Peruvians. With this paste, which was called *sancu yelba*, the Peruvians not only used to paint themselves in the face; even the idols representing their highest gods and the embalmed corpses of their dead ancestors were coated with it on solemn occasions. At an annual purification feast, called *citua*, when sacrifices of sheep were made, the mashed maize was mixed up with the blood of the victims and used as an ointment. Extraordinary magical virtues seem to have been ascribed to this paste, which especially was believed to keep off diseases.[2]

Among the Chiriguanos in Bolivia the *urucú*-painting is frequently practised by convalescents who are recovering from grave diseases. The missionary Del Campana, who records this, says that it is done in order to conceal the traces which diseases like smallpox and dry scall have left on the body, and especially on the face.[3] But this explanation is probably not correct. The Indians do not find the scars and pits left by such diseases disfiguring in the same way as civilized peoples, and it hardly would occur to them to try to conceal them for this reason. With more probability there is the idea that, since the face has been especially attacked by the disease-demon, this part must be particularly protected by prophylactic painting. That this is so may be inferred from some other cases of body-painting in sickness or on recovery from it. Among these same Chiriguanos a child-bed woman, after she has been delivered, has her body smeared over with the red of *urucú*.[1] Considering the other precautional measures she is subject to at the same time (fasting, etc.), we may safely say that the painting has for its object to purify her from the pollution of childbirth, and to protect her against evil spirits. For a similar reason, no doubt, among the Passé Indians of Brazil the father of a newborn child paints himself black for the days he is observing the rules of the couvade.[2] Among the Guarayús the father who lay in couvade used to paint his feet, hands, and joints black and fast for three days.[3] According to the principles of couvade, the condition of the father is, during the first days, intimately bound up with that of his child. The black painting, therefore, not only protects the father against malign influences, but first of all his delicate son.

---

[1] Cobo, *Historia del nuevo mundo*, iv. 150.

[2] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 140, 141, 144, 145. The *teopatli* of the ancient Mexicans also affords an interesting instance of a magical ointment, and may therefore be mentioned in this connection. It was made of the ashes of certain venomous creatures, such as spiders, scorpions, palmers, salamanders, and vipers, which were burnt upon the hearth of the temple, and thereafter powdered in mortars. The ashes were mingled with tobacco and *betum* (a herb). The priests anointed themselves from foot to head with this sacred ointment when they went to the mountains to make sacrifices, and it was supposed to " take away fear, and to give them courage." Acosta, *Natural and Moral History of the Indies* (Hakluyt Society), ii. 365.

[3] Del Campana, *Notizie intorno ai Ciriguani* (*Archivio per l'antropologia e la etnologia*, Firenze, 1902), p. 62.

Several other facts relating to the social customs of the South American Indians may be adduced, where the magical significance of the body-painting is equally clear.

Thus, we are told that the Caucahues of Chile used to paint their face black with charcoal before they entered the frozen lagoons, and that, according to the belief of these natives, any person who would not take this precaution would die.[4] Apparently it was considered that lacking the painting, he lacked the necessary protection against the dangerous spirits that held the frozen lakes.

The missionary Del Campana relates that the Chiriguano women paint themselves hideously in the face on the occasion when they are preparing the *chicha* (maize-beer).[5] This practice cannot be understood unless we know that just as the maize-beer itself is a sacred drink, so its preparation is a more or less ceremonial business. It may be that the facial painting is believed to give the women influence over and resistance against the maize spirit, with whom they are dealing at the brewing of the beer. Or, since the Indians often have recourse to body-painting for important works and undertakings in the belief that they will thereby acquire strength, it is possible that the Chiriguano women paint themselves on the said occasion only to make themselves, in general, strong and vigorous for the most important home industry incumbent on the Indian woman.

---

[1] Del Campana, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

[2] v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 511.

[3] Cardús, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

[4] Medina, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

[5] Del Campana, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

Dr. Koch-Grünberg tells that among the Kobéua in north-west Brazil, when a woman is delivered, she is assisted by all married women in the village, and that on this occasion they are painted red in the face as for a feast.[1] We know that childbirth is one of the occasions when evil spirits are especially supposed to be in action. Moreover, there is danger not only for the childbed woman herself but also for other persons present. They have to protect themselves against the invisible foes much in the same way as those taking part in an ordinary exorcism or conjuration, and this, among other things, is effected through a prophylactic body-painting.

Among some Indian tribes the rules of etiquette require that, at the arrival of guests in a village, both they and the hosts should be painted or otherwise adorned. This is the custom, for instance, among the Karayá in east Brazil. When the guests arrive, all inhabitants of the village paint themselves in the face with red and black patterns, and the guests likewise ornament themselves with painting before they enter the village.[2] Among some tribes on the Orinoco it is customary to paint the whole body red with *urucú* for a visit, and when the guests arrive, hospitality requires that their body-paintings, which possibly have been fouled by the dust on the way, should be renewed by the hosts.[3] Similarly, the Jibaros of Ecuador prepare themselves with great care and in different ways when they are about to pay a visit to a strange village, one of their decorations being to paint the face as well as the breast in red or other colours. The hosts, in receiving their guests, paint themselves in the same fashion.[4] Among the ancient Guaycurús the guests used to put on all their ornaments, as well as their swords, lances, arrows, clothes, and beads, for "they ran a risk." They stopped about one league outside the village which they wanted to visit, and in the following morning drew near, all decoratively painted red. The first salutation was a formal combat with fists.[5]

---

[1] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, ii. 146.

[2] Krause, *op. cit.*, p. 213. Cp. also, on the tribes of the Kuliséhu, Schmidt, *Indianerstudien in Zentralbrasilien*, pp. 64, 109.

[3] Depons, *Voyage à la partie orientale de la terre-firme*, i. 307.

[4] Vacas Galindo, *Nankijukima*, p. 78.

[5] Sanchez Labrador, *El Paraguay catolico*, ii. 13.

To explain such facts by saying that the Indians paint themselves for a visit simply to be fine and neat, just as civilized peoples dress and decorate themselves on similar occasions, would certainly be entirely to misinterpret a primitive custom from a civilized point of view. In this case also body-painting is obviously due to certain superstitious ideas, widely spread not only among the Indians, but among many other savage races as well. The often ceremonial character, which the reception of a guest assumes in the lower culture, is founded on the consideration that the visiting stranger, even though he be of the same race, is always a more or less mysterious and dangerous being. He may be a potential source of evil; he may be a powerful wizard who is bringing disease or ill-luck upon the people he is visiting;[1] or, he may be the ghost of a dead man who is calling on his surviving relatives in the guise of a stranger. This is the idea Dr. Ehrenreich found among the Karayá. The stranger was always received with a certain distrust; in fact, he came armed, and was received with arms as if he had been an enemy. "Even if he came as a friend there was still the possibility that the people were dealing with a hostile *kamiri* (ghost), especially the ghost of a murdered man, who had taken the disguise of the expected guest in order to revenge himself on his murderers." As ghosts usually come noiselessly the visitors always announce their arrival by gesticulations and loud shouts to show that they are beings of flesh and blood.[2] The belief here pointed out is certainly not confined to the tribes Dr. Ehrenreich is describing. In Chaco, when I visited the Chorotis in the interior of their land, it struck me that, on my arrival at a village, I was received by a loud wailing of the women and children. I soon learnt that a great chief had died some time ago; but the fact that the wailing was raised to receive me remained unexplained. Yet it is the rule among the Chorotis that, when strangers arrive at a village where a death has recently taken place, they must be received with wailing. The most probable explanation seems to be that it is feared lest the dead should revisit his people in a strange disguise.[3] The wailing after a death is among these Indians ceremonial, and its object is to propitiate the dead.

---

[1] Cp. Westermarck, *Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, i. 584.

[2] Ehrenreich, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

[3] Among the ancient Jupis in Brazil also it was customary to receive a guest or a relative, who had been away for a long time, by weeping and wailing (Lery, *op. cit.*, p. 414), a custom which probably was due to the same belief. Of the Chamacoco Indians in Paraguay we are told that on an occasion when they were just celebrating a death-feast to drive away the evil demons who had taken away a great chief of theirs, their camp was suddenly attacked by a band of the savage Moro Indians. They concluded that

Again, the Jibaros, when they enter into a strange house, especially fear the bewitching arrow which the treacherous inhabitants may throw against the visitors when they least expect it. Facial painting is resorted to as a prophylactic against this eventuality. On the other hand, the hosts especially fear the evil eye, with which the strange visitor may look upon women and children in the house, thus causing them to fall ill and die.

Notwithstanding these unpleasant possibilities, prudence bids that strangers should be courteously received, but certain precautions—painting, etc.—are considered necessary, even though these be taken under the pretext that it is to welcome and honour the guest. This idea may gradually become predominant in the custom, but it cannot entirely supplant the primary belief. The body-painting, where it is practised as a visiting ceremony in South America, has not originated in the desire of guests or hosts to adorn themselves, but has been a charm to counteract the evil influences they mutually fear from each other.

For certain dangerous undertakings the Indians likewise practise body-painting, and evidently from the same motives as in the above cases. Thus from Dr. Koch-Grünberg's description it appears that the Indians of the Rio Negro used to paint their bodies before they went out canoeing. When he passed the "cachoeiras" of R. Tiguié, he met several canoes with Indians who had their bodies painted red. Even during the passage the women were constantly painting red patterns on their faces.[1] Dr. Koch-Grünberg suggests no explanation of this ornamentation, but for my own part I have little doubt that it was resorted to with a view to escaping the dangers threatening on the river. By the rapids and cataracts where accidents are likely to occur, evil spirits are lurking. The very engravings and inscriptions which the same traveller found in the rocks on the river here and there,[2] and which are known from many parts of South

---

these unexpected enemies were the demons, and began to fight against them with their heavy battle-axes with which they had armed themselves for combating the spirits during the dance (Friĉ, "Die unbekannten Stämme des Chaco Boreal," in *Globus*, Bd. XCVI., 1909, p. 26).

[1] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 282. Cp. ii. 86.

[2] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 280.

America, in my opinion are to be explained as charms, to counteract the evil designs of the spirits inhabiting these rocks.[1]

Professor von den Steinen, speaking of the Indians of the Rio Xingú, relates that before the Indian leaves for hunting, his wife paints him carefully with oil paint, especially on the breast and on the back.[2] The writer says that this is done to keep off mosquitoes and flies on the march, but it is highly doubtful whether this is the only or the real motive for the practice. Some other facts mentioned by Professor von den Steinen suggest to me another explanation. Hunting is a risky undertaking, especially because of the belief of the Xingú Indians that the souls of the departed reincarnate themselves in the animals which give them their main supply of food. As soon as an animal was killed, certain ceremonies were performed in order to propitiate its angry spirit; until this had taken place its flesh could not be eaten.[3] The body-painting of the hunter may therefore have been nothing but a charm against the dangerous spirits with which he was going to deal. The same I take to be the explanation of another case of body-painting mentioned by von den Steinen. The wife of an Indian who was returning from a long hunting expedition welcomed her husband by painting her hair and face in the way typical of these tribes: angular designs and certain other lines and ornaments were applied to the cheeks, the temples and the forehead.[4] It is probable that the woman had taken this precaution in order not to receive any evil influences from her husband, who had been dealing with the killed animals, that is, with the ghosts of dead men, and therefore was tabooed. This explanation gains some support by a further detail, namely, that she was, moreover, vested for the occasion in a sort of feather jacket,[5] for these feathers can only be explained as magical charms.

It must, however, be added that body-painting for a hunting expedition is also practised with a general view to strengthening the body for the march, whereas in some cases it is even regarded as a charm to attract the game. This latter idea I myself found especially prevailing among the Canelos Indians of Ecuador.[6]

---

[1] See *infra*, Chapter VIII.

[2] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

[3] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, pp. 491, 492, 511, 512, etc.

[4] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 476.

[5] v. d. Steinen, *loc. cit.*

[6] See Karsten, *Contributions to the Sociology of the Indian Tribe of Ecuador* (*Acta Academiæ Aboënsis.* Humaniora, i: 3), p. 37 *sq*.

Lastly, body-painting is widely practised by the Indians before marching out for war. This custom is indeed so general in South America that it is needless to illustrate it with numerous instances. By the warlike tribes in Chaco, for instance, it seems to have been universal. Father Lozano, describing the Tobas some two hundred years ago, says that they used to colour both the face and the body, especially in time of war. Then they painted themselves like tigers and other formidable animals, the figures of which they imagined would make them more terrible to their enemies.[1] The warlike Abipones had the custom of pricking their tongues repeatedly so that blood flowed, smearing the whole body afterwards with the blood; over this dye they applied black paint elaborately with charcoal. This outfit was supposed to make them so strong and ferocious that they were able to kill and destroy everything in their way.[2] The Tobas of the present time, before they march out for a battle, blacken the face with charcoal, whereas the breast, the stomach, and the arms are painted red with *urucú*. Much the same war-painting is practised by the Matacos,[3] the Chorotis, and the Ashluslays.[4] Of the primitive Fuegians also we hear that they especially paint themselves for a war. " A squadron armed for battle is more like a maniple of demons than a troop of men, to such an extent are their bodies and faces disfigured by paintings. The more horrible a man makes himself, the more strength he believes himself to acquire."[5]

From the northern parts of South America many similar instances could be mentioned. Thus, von Martius says that the Uaupés Indians smear their body, especially the neck and the back, with the juice of the *genipapo* fruit for war and war-dances " in order to give themselves a more terrible appearance."[6] Likewise, the Macusis of Guiana adorn themselves in a special way in time of war, smearing not only the body but also the hair profusely with *urucú*.[7]

Body-painting for war has generally been explained from the Indian's desire to make himself more terrible in appearance to his enemies.[1] But this explanation does not touch the root of the custom. Even from some of the instances just quoted it appears that the Indians really believe they will become more ferocious or get more strength for the battle by painting themselves. This perfectly agrees with the explanation I received myself from a Toba chief when I inquired of him about this custom. He said that the Indians paint themselves for a battle "to get more strength." This is indeed quite obvious in cases where the warriors smear their body with blood, since the blood is to a primitive mind identical with life and strength. The expression, however, has to be explained. The Indian, when he speaks about his social customs, often disguises the religious ideas connected with them by such general phrases. The statement in reality implies that the painting is a protection against the evil spirits which cause weakness and fatigue. As a matter of fact, many things and occurrences which appear quite natural to civilized man are by the Indian set down to supernatural causes. For instance, if at hunting his arm fails when he is drawing the bow, or if it trembles so that he misses the prey, he ascribes this to an evil spirit who has taken possession of the arm, and he will try to rid himself from it by letting the blood. Still more, of course, are supernatural dangers lurking in battle. Demons of death and ill-luck wander about; the wound he receives, the accident or mishap that befalls him, the fatigue that overtakes him, is due to the evil designs of unseen spiritual powers. In Chaco, for example, the Indians prepare themselves in different ways before they march out for a war. They not only paint the face and the body, but also ornament themselves with ostrich plumes and other charms, they drink excessively of their fermented beers, they arrange war-dances. All these are different measures taken to ensure good luck or to protect the warriors against the evil demons in the coming battle, who are still more feared than their natural enemies.

---

[1] Lozano, *Historia de la Compañia de Jesús en la Provincia de Paraguay*, i. 99.

[2] Lozano, *Descripción chorographica de las Provincias del Gran Chaco*, p. 90.

[3] Pelleschi, *Otto mesi nel Gran Ciacco*, p. 107. Baldrich, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

[4] Nordenskiöld, *Indianerleben*, p. 132.

[5] Bove, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

[6] v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 595.

[7] Schomburgk, *op. cit.*, ii. 322.

As the Indian paints himself for different occasions in life, so he sometimes needs the wonder-working dye after death. The custom of painting the dead, either the entire corpse, or the skull and bones after the decomposition of the body, has been, and is still, practised by many South American tribes in connection with some other peculiar funeral ceremonies. Geographically this custom has been limited to certain areas, especially in the northern and western parts of the continent.

---

[1] This theory is set forth, for instance, by Joest in his book, *Tätowiren, Narbenzeichnen und Körperbemalen*, p. 19.

Numerous instances are known from Brazil. Thus, even of the ancient Tupis we know that they tried to prevent the decomposition of the bodies of their chiefs by anointing the corpse with honey and coating it with feathers.[1] From the Bororó near the Rio Xingú we have detailed descriptions of similar ceremonies. The corpse is buried in the forest near the water. After the lapse of some time it is exhumed and bared of its flesh, a feast is held the purpose of which is to adorn and pack-in the skeleton. A bleeding ceremony is performed by the relatives, whereupon the bones are carefully painted. The lower jaw of the dead man is taken out from the skull, smeared with *urucú*, and coated with feathers, after which it is put in again. The whole skull is bedaubed with purple feathers in the most careful manner, beginning from the back of the head. Lastly, even the basket into which the skull is subsequently laid is smeared with the same red paint. The other bones are painted in the same way, and, after a feast which lasts for many weeks, all the remains are buried.[2] Among the Karayá in east Brazil, according to Dr. Krause, the body of the dead is smeared with rosin and covered with feathers; the face is painted with *urucú*, and some other ornamental measures are taken.[3] The Ipurinas of the Rio Purus, says Dr. Ehrenreich, bury their dead with weapons, implements, and ornaments. After some time the bones are exhumed and smeared with *urucú*, whereupon they are laid in a basket, which is suspended over a fire. This ceremonial preparation of the bones is, moreover, connected with a "stork-dance."[4] The tribes living on the plains round the springs of the Rio Branco are reported to practise the same funeral ceremonies. After the chief has been buried for some time and the body is decomposed, his bones are exhumed, cleaned, and painted red with *urucú* or *carayurú*, whereupon they are laid in a big jar the outside of which is coated with a rosin varnish.[5] Among the Siusi, living at one of the tributaries of the Rio Negro, Dr. Koch-Grünberg was present at a funeral ceremony at which the dead man's face was smeared with the red of *carayurú* and afterwards covered with a sort of mask made of a gourd's shell. Lastly, the whole corpse was wrapped up in some old clothes, tied round with the fibres of the Tucum palm, and buried in a canoe.[1] In the same way some Indian tribes in Guiana and Venezuela prepare the bodies of the dead. Thus, the Roocooyen Indians dry or mummify the corpse in some way, so that it turns hard like a parchment. After this, they smear it all over with red *urucú*, adorn it with plumes and other ornaments, and bury it.[2]

---

[1] Southey, *op. cit.*, i. 248.

[2] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, pp. 505, 507, 508. Waehneldt, "Exploração da Provincia do Mato Grosso," in *Revista Trimensal do Instituto historico y geographico do Brazil*, Bd. XXVII., 1864, p. 217. Waehneldt's description of these ceremonies in some details differs from that of von den Steinen, which, possibly, is due to the fact that he visited another Bororô tribe (that of R. Jauru) than the latter explorer.

[3] Krause, *op. cit.*, p. 330.

[4] Ehrenreich, *op. cit.*, p. 66. Cp. also p. 30 (on the Karayá).

[5] v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 636.

In order to understand these curious customs we must know the eschatological ideas upon which they are founded. Speaking in general terms, we may say that such funeral practices are invariably suggested by the desire to preserve the body of the departed as long as possible, and this desire in its turn is connected with the belief that the welfare of the dead in the next existence fundamentally depends on the degree of integrity with which the corpse is preserved. The Indian not only believes in the continued existence of man after death, he also firmly holds the doctrine of metempsychosis. The dead ancestor will be reborn later in another shape, be it as a man (one of his descendants), as an animal, as a plant, or as an object of nature. But this reincarnation is possible only in case the bodily remains of the dead have been preserved. In every part of the dead body, according to Indian belief, there is still something left of the spirit or soul, especially in those parts which, even without artificial aid, longest resist decomposition—*viz.*, the skull and the bones. Now if these parts be destroyed, the man's whole being is destroyed; his soul at the same time as his body. He is annihilated as an individual, and can no longer be reincarnated in any form. In this way we have to explain anthropophagy, the custom of eating of slain enemies and destroying their bones, which, especially in Peru and Brazil, has been ceremonial and an act of hatred and fanaticism.

---

[1] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 164.

[2] Crevaux, *Voyage dans l'Amérique du Sud*, p. 238. On the custom of mummifying the corpses, see also v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 404, 635.

[3] See on this point, for instance, what Captain T. W. Whiffen says of anthropophagy with reference to the Indians of the Issá-Japurá district (between R. Negro and R. Napó). "Anthropophagy," he says, "is a purely ceremonial matter, a ritual of vengeance." . . . "To appreciate the extent of the revenge accomplished by these anthropophagous practices, it must be remembered that the Indian has an invincible hatred of all wild animals, which he looks upon as his enemies. To serve an enemy as a dead beast—to eat him—is the most

The very reverse of this treatment is the careful and loving conservation of the dead father and ancestor which enables him to subsist and to be revived some time in the future to a continued visible existence. This belief is clearly expressed, for instance, by von Tschudi with special reference to the tribes of the Rio Ucayali in Peru. "All these tribes," he says, "provide new bodies for their dead for the new life. Sometimes they believe that they will turn out beautiful and perfect men, sometimes they endow them with the shape of some animal; everybody will after death be transformed into the animal the character of which most corresponds with his own."[1] The belief in the future rebirth of the dead probably has suggested some peculiar practices with regard to the posture given the dead body at interment. Thus, we may assume that the common Indian custom to inter the dead in a seated or squatted attitude, with the head pressed down between the knees, has originated in the desire to facilitate his rebirth by giving him the position of the fœtus in the mother's womb, just as the clay jar itself in which many Indians bury their dead may be taken to represent the womb. This is expressly stated, for instance, with regard to the Guahivos in Venezuela by Crevaux, who, describing the ceremonies performed at funerals, says that, at the interment of the dead, "On lui donne l'attitude du fœtus dans le sein maternel."[2] Similarly Thevet, speaking of the burial customs of the ancient Tupis, says that on the death of a relative "ils le courbent en un bloc et monceau dans le lict oú il est décédé: tout ainsi que les enfants sont au ventre de la mère."[3] The same idea has prevailed among the Aymaras in Peru and Bolivia.

---

profound insult he can offer." . . . "Now death to the Indian is not an end of all things. It is transition. . . . In the world of the After Life the soul requires what the body needed on earth. Mutilate the body, divorce it from all its possessions, keep essential portions of it, and a naked soul is cast forth to wander endlessly in the forest, or to go down the holes in the earth that lead to the regions of the damned. In any case, the Indian's Paradise is unattainable to his enemies" ("A Short Account of the Indians of the Issá-Japurá District," in *Folk-Lore*, March 13, 1913, pp. 53, 54). Although I do not agree with this explanation at every point, we may, however, regard it as certain that in South America anthropophagy is essentially a ceremonial custom, and that the mutilation of an enemy's body is believed to exert influence upon his existence in the next life. Of the anthropophagous Tupis likewise we hear that "they did not eat their enemies from hunger, but from a great hatred and envy" (Gottfriedt, *Neue Welt und Amerikanische Historien*, p. 121).

[1] v. Tschudi, *Peru*, ii. 238.

[2] Crevaux, *op. cit.*, p. 548. Cp. also, on the Indians of French Guiana, Barrere, *Nouvelle relation de la France équinoxiale*, p. 229.

[3] Thevet, *Cosmographie universelle*, ii. 925.

"In ancient times," says Forbes, "the position of the body in the tomb or grave was always that which the infant had originally occupied in its mother's womb, the knees being drawn up to the chin and the arms placed crosswise over the breast."[1]

The lowest savages in America, although they all believe in the continued existence of the departed soul, have not carried out this doctrine in such detail, and therefore as a rule do not take much care of their dead relatives. The Sirionos in Bolivia, for example, simply leave the corpse where the man has died and desert the place. On the other hand, when we hear that many wild tribes in Brazil and the northern parts of South America preserve the corpses of their dead in the way we have seen, this may in part be due to the influence they have received from those advanced Indian cultures which in ancient times were developed on the Andean high plateaus in the West of the continent. Of these civilized Indians, the Incas and the Chibchas, we know that the cult of the dead played an enormously important rôle in their religious and social life, showing itself especially in the extraordinary care with which the dead were preserved. The elaborate measures taken to protect the corpses against destruction and decomposition by mummification, embalming, wrapping up in clothes, painting, etc., find their natural explanation in the desire of the living to secure the future of the dead.[2]

---

[1] Forbes, *The Aymara Indians of Bolivia and Peru* (*Journal of the Ethnol. Soc. of London*, 1870), p. 47. It does not, however, clearly appear whether the writers I am quoting have received this explanation from the natives themselves, or whether they only express their own idea.

[2] See in this respect, for instance, the interesting archæological discoveries, recently made by Reiss and Stübel at Ancon in Peru. From these discoveries it appears that, amongst other things, *painting* also was used by the ancient Peruvians to preserve the corpses. "The features of adult as well as infant mummies are not unfrequently covered with a thick covering of a red colour, protected by a layer of cotton" (Reiss and Stübel, *The Necropolis of Ancon in Peru*, i., plate 29). As to the connection between the conservation of the body and the eschatological ideas held by these Indians, see, for instance, Cobo, *Historia del nuevo mundo*, iii. 342: "The Incas . . . held the bodies of the Lords in great veneration, especially the bodies of those from whom they descended, regarding them as the root of their own birth. The reason which they gave for this was that they held the idea that *the generation would be multiplied by their bodies being conserved and respected.*" This statement clearly sets out the idea of future rebirth and reincarnation. As to the great care with which the graves were tended among the ancient Peruvians, compare also the statement of Las Casas: "Tenian en gran reverencia y usaban y guardaban exactísima religion con sus difuntos y sepolturas y entierros, y ninguna injuria se les podria cometer ni que màs sintiesen, que a sus difuntos y violarles sus sepolturas" (Las Casas, *De las antiguas gentes del Peru*, p. 126).

To return to the custom of painting the dead, I think we can fully understand it in the light of the eschatological ideas just mentioned. It is probable that the red *urucú*, as also the honey and the rosin, really possesses some natural power to counteract the pernicious influences of the air upon the dead body. But still we have reason to assume that in such cases also the Indians have practised painting first of all because of the supernatural virtues ascribed to it, or, to express it more plainly, that *they paint the corpse or the bones in order to keep off the evil spirits which are supposed to cause decomposition.* This point of view is important because, in my opinion, it explains an interesting class of Indian ornaments: the decorative painting applied to the jars in which the dead are interred. There is, I think, sufficient reason for assuming that the geometrical lines, animals, and other figures, which the ancient Indians in western and northern South America used to paint on the burial jars, were nothing but *amulets or charms to protect the corpse or the bones, contained in the jar, against the evil demons who were trying to destroy them.* This theory will appear more probable in connection with some other facts relating to the Indian pattern painting. At present it is sufficient to point out that among many Indian tribes there is evidently the belief that the evil spirits do harm not only to the living but also to the dead—a belief which, naturally, is strongest among those peoples who, for the reasons given, are most anxious to conserve the dead. Thus the ancient Tupis, who interred their dead chiefs with special care, making the grave so as to form a sort of vault and giving them their weapons as well as food and drink, believed that unless these precautions were taken *Anhanga* (the evil spirit) would devour the dead.[1] Moreover, not only the weapons of the dead chiefs were laid in the grave with them, but also their *maracas* or rattle-gourds.[2] This rattle-gourd was among the Tupis, as it still is among many South American tribes, a powerful instrument to exorcise evil spirits, and it is evident that the deceased was believed to have the same use for it after death. The common practice to inter the dead with all his ornaments, especially his magnificent feather ornaments, as if he were dressed for a feast, is also an evidence to the same effect; for, as I shall show in the following chapters, the feather dresses, rattle ornaments, etc., which the Indians use at their feasts, together constitute a real magical apparatus to conjure the demons.

---

[1] Southey, *op. cit.*, i. 248. Cp. Thevet, *op. cit.*, ii. 925.

[2] Southey, *loc. cit.* Various others of the elaborate precautions taken at burial—for instance, the practice of making a big fire on the grave which is kept burning for a long time, surrounding it with cactus hedges, and so forth—are suggested by the desire to keep off evil spirits as well as wild animals. See, for instance, the description of Sievers', relating to the Goajiros of Colombia, in his *Reise in der Sierra Nevada de Santa Maria*, p. 258. Of the Botocudos the Prince of Wied-Neuwied expressly states that they kept fires burning for some time on each side of the grave "to keep off the devil" (*Reise nach Brasilien*, ii. 57). Similarly, of the Araucanians we are told that in connection with other burial rites care is also taken to prevent the intervention of the evil spirits "to whose attacks the dead body is particularly exposed" (Guevara, *Psicolojia del pueblo Araucano*, p. 266).

Like most Indian burial customs, the custom of painting the jars and baskets in which the corpses or their remains are interred has originated in religious and superstitious ideas. The pattern ornamentation in this respect has much the same significance as the simple coating with paint. Of the latter Professor von den Steinen gives an interesting example in reference to the Bororó when he tells us that the basket in which the skull and the bones of the dead were deposited for interment was carefully coated with *urucú*, both inside and outside, and covered with purple feathers.[1]

In addition to the above instances of a magical body-painting, the following facts, referring to some Indian tribes of Ecuador, visited by me, may be mentioned. The Colorado Indians in western Ecuador have got their name from their habit of painting not only their whole face and body, but also their clothes—their loin-cloths, mantles, etc.—red with *achiote* (*urucú*, *Bixa orellana*), a painting which gives them a very peculiar appearance.[2] The general idea held of this painting is that it gives the body strength and affords protection against disease. Some men, besides, occasionally paint various designs on the body in other colours. Thus, black spots may be applied in imitation of the black spots on the fell of the jaguar, a painting which is believed to give the wearer something of the strength of that wild beast.

In eastern Ecuador body-painting, especially the red painting with *achiote*, is practised by all tribes, the most common ideas connected with the custom being that it gives strength and protects against disease.[3] On the Napo, for instance, women and children were often particularly painted red in the face at times when catarrhs were common or epidemics were raging. Once in a house I found not only several of the younger women, but also small babes profusely painted red in the face. When I inquired the reason for this painting, I got the answer that it was a protection against the *malu huaira*, or *huaira ungüi*, "the evil wind," or the illness which is supposed to be carried about by certain winds. Among the Canelos Indians on the Rio Bobonaza the red body-painting served different ends. Partly it was, as among other Indians, believed to give the body strength and power of resistance. But it was especially regarded as a powerful charm against witchcraft carried out through the evil eye. The red dye mixed with certain other ingredients—especially with the pounded leaves of the magical plant *simayùka*—was also used as a love charm. An Indian, being painted under the eyes with this red dye, was supposed to exert an almost irresistible influence upon the women in the house visited, and to be able to seduce them.

---

[1] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 508.

[2] The name " Colorados " means " The Red Ones."

[3] As to the different magical ideas which the Indians of eastern Ecuador, and especially the Jibaros, connect with body-painting, see Karsten, *The Religion of the Jibaro Indians of Eastern Ecuador* (*Boletín de la Academia Nacional de Historia*, vol. iv., No. 10), p. 22.

Another idea connected with the red body-painting among the Canelos Indians was that it attracts the game and gives good luck in hunting. Before the men started for a hunting expedition, their wives always painted them red in the face with *urucú*. The Indians say that if they are not painted red in the face they will not be able to attract and kill any game. Even the hunting dogs were, therefore, profusely coated on the back with crude *achiote* before starting.[1] Among the wild Jibaros much the same ideas prevail. The red paint, applied to the face and the body, makes the Indian strong, valiant, and manly, and is therefore always resorted to before starting for a long journey, for hunting expeditions, and for visiting. The unpainted Indian looks pale, weak, and sickly, and is particularly believed to have little resistance against the invisible bewitching arrows of malicious sorcerers. The sorcerer or medicine-man, again, when he is exercising his art, is generally painted red in the face, since the facial painting is believed to attract the spirits he is invoking. The Indians fancy that they can summon the spirits (*wakáni*, *iguánchi*) by imitating them in their external appearance, dress, etc., and since even the demons are believed to practise facial painting, the sorcerers have recourse to the same measure in order to please and summon them.

---

[1] It is interesting to note that exactly the same ideas and customs prevail in Guiana. See Roth, *Animism and Folklore of the Guiana Indians*, p. 282.

Before making an attack on a hostile tribe the Jibaros always blacken their face and body with the black dye obtained from the fruit of the *Genipa americana*. The Indians say that by blackening themselves in this way they become like the demons (*iguanchi*), which means that they also get their ferocity and strength. The black body-painting at the same time inspires the enemy with terror, and serves as a mark by which the Indians are able to distinguish friend from foe in the heat of the battle. When a Jibaro warrior returns from battle he again paints his body black, the painting now being regarded as a protection against the soul of the slain enemy.[1]

The facts adduced in the previous pages are, I think, sufficient to permit of a general conclusion as to the origin of body-painting among the South American Indians. There are, as we have seen, numerous instances in which body-painting cannot possibly be accounted for by any of the theories hitherto presented by writers who have treated of this custom; neither can it be explained as an " ornament " in the common sense of the word, nor as a protection against mosquitoes and flies, or against the changes of the weather. Although such motives may have operated in exceptional cases, it seems evident that the custom of body-painting has, above everything, been connected with the magical and religious beliefs of the natives—a fact that cannot surprise anybody who knows the predominant part religion and superstition plays in the practical life of the Indian. The fundamental idea underlying body-painting seems to be that *it gives the body strength*, and hence affords an efficacious protection against disease and witchcraft and evil influences in general. Besides, as we have seen, various secondary motives may operate. On the other hand, I do not know a single instance of body-painting being applied as a direct sexual stimulant for marriage, and I cannot therefore subscribe to the theory set forth by Dr. Westermarck[2] and certain other writers. What still remains to be shortly considered is the question: How comes it that such magical or supernatural effects are ascribed to the paint applied to the body? This question is difficult to answer satisfactorily, because the Indian's way of reasoning is so different from our own. Just as his ideas of supernatural beings often seem to a civilized mind incomprehensible in their naïveté, so are also the means by which he thinks he can work upon them. As for painting, it is clear that in many cases there is simply the idea that the odd appearance it gives a person inspires the evil demons with fear, and thus keeps them off. This is particularly the case with the black hue which the soot or charcoal gives the face and the body. Only from this point of view is the black the " colour of sorrow " to the Indian: the revengeful ghost of the departed shuns the strange-looking black face. Such a colour is certainly not regarded as beautiful even by the savage himself, but, as the Indian usually expresses such things, it is " good "—good for the practical purpose mentioned. But the prophylactic effects of body-painting evidently also depend on some mysterious virtues ascribed to the dye itself. Thus soot and charcoal seem to share with ashes the quality of being a strong antidote against evil spirits. Most Indians in the tropical and subtropical parts of South America, as we have seen, use for paint partly the red seeds of the roucou (*urucú*) plant (*Bixa orellana*), partly the black juice of the *genipapo* fruit (*Genipa americana*). The dye obtained from these plants, and especially from the *genipapo*, is very astringent, and when once applied, is not easily removed. We know that the Indians are very prone to ascribe supernatural virtues to plants and herbs which possess some striking and mysterious properties. Thus tobacco, coca, parica, and the ferment contained in the intoxicating liquors are looked upon as sacred because of the mysterious effects they exert upon the human body and mind, and consequently have a great importance in practical religion and medicine. The same may be said of the pimento or Indian pepper, which is rubbed into the skin and the blood at certain initiations. It may in part be due to similar inherent properties that the roucou and the *genipapo* owe their repute as charms against evil influences.

---

[1] Karsten, *Blood Revenge, War, and Victory Feasts among the Jibaro Indians*, pp. 25, 43, 86, etc.

[2] Dr. Westermarck, in trying to prove his thesis, quotes, among other things, a passage relating to the Guarayús in Bolivia. Among these Indians "a suitor paints himself from head to foot, and, armed with his battle-club, promenades for several days round the cabin of the mistress of his heart, until on a day of feasting and dancing the marriage is consummated (*History of Human Marriage*, 1921, i. 512). But when we know the ideas that the Indians connect with court-

Although the black painting seems to be considered as a stronger prophylactic against evil influences than other colours, yet the *red* is, on the whole, the favourite colour of the Indian, and most com-

---

ship and marriage, we understand that the suitor does not paint himself in this way to please the girl. His chief concern on that occasion is to ward off, and gain resistance against, supernatural enemies. This is no doubt also the reason why he has armed himself with his battle-club as if he were going out to war.

monly used. It is an easy conjecture that the magical efficacy ascribed to the red paint is due to its resemblance to blood, and that it is applied as a substitute for blood. As we have seen in some instances above, smearing with blood is sometimes practised by the Indians as a means of giving strength. Thus the Carib father, lying in couvade, bled himself and smeared with the flowing liquid his delicate son. Father Gumilla, speaking of the Guamos on the Orinoco, says that when small children were ill, their mothers used to prick their own tongues with a pointed bone and smear with the flowing blood their sick babes, from head to foot.[1] He also tells that, when in a village an epidemic was raging, a chief tried to save his people by drawing his own blood and smearing therewith the patients.[2] The Abipones, as I have mentioned before, used to smear their hair with the blood of oxen. In such cases we are dealing with a direct transfusion of strength from one person to another, the red dye at the same time acting as a charm against evil influences. It may, therefore, be assumed that, for instance, the red *urucú* has been regarded as an imitation of blood and consequently, according to the principles of sympathetic magic, believed to produce the same supernatural effects. But although this idea probably has been present in some cases, it cannot be taken as the whole explanation of the efficacy ascribed to the red paint.

In the Indian's predilection for bright colours, and especially for red, there is evidently also an element of *delight in colour* which, operating as a secondary motive, may have contributed to the widespread use of such paints. Moreover, red is a fascinating colour because of its stimulating effects upon the human and the animal mind, and from this point of view also we can understand how it has come to act as a real charm. Just as the timid deer, fascinated and, as it were, bewitched by the bright colour of the blanket which the hunter holds up towards it, is drawn nearer and nearer the object of its fear, so the red paint may be thought to have a similar irresistible effect both upon supernatural beings and men. Thus the

---

[1] Gumilla, *op. cit.*, i. 164.

[2] The hypothesis that to the Indian mind the red paint is identical with blood is, in a way, confirmed by a statement relating to the ancient Guaycurús For their wars they blackened their body from head to foot, but they never, we are told, painted themselves red on such occasions. This would, according to their idea, be fatal to their victory. "They say that if they went out red-painted, their blood would flow on the earth, they would be killed or wounded without honour" (Sanchez Labrador, *op. cit.*, i. 308).

Mataco man, who paints himself with red, blue, and black colours for courtship,[1] perhaps believes that by these colours he may exert a magical influence, not only upon some malignant spiritual powers, but also upon the girl he wants for his wife. This latter explanation is suggested by a statement relating to the Cainguá of upper Paraná. These Indians, according to Dr. Ambrosetti, use different charms for love, the strongest of these being that composed of vermilion. It is supposed to be of an irresistible power. If the Indian, in possession of this charm, goes to visit the girl he likes and finds her reluctant to follow him, he shows her the charm and says: " I have the vermilion which is a great *payé ;* if you do not follow me to the forest it will fill you with terrible sores."[2] The Cainguá thus have much the same idea of the vermilion as the Canelos Indians.

These points of view may at present suffice with regard to the custom of body-painting, In a later chapter I shall try to show that the ultimate origin of the magical power ascribed to the red or black dye, obtained from certain plants, is to be sought in the *spirits* which are believed to animate these plants and to effect their growth. This cannot be put forward in detail until we reach the chapter on the Indian plant spirits.

[1] Baldrich, *op. cit.*, p. 232.
[2] Ambrosetti, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

CHAPTER II

CUSTOMS RELATING TO HAIR AND NAILS, HEAD AND SKIN

THE class of primitive customs with which I shall deal in this chapter plays an important part, not only among the South American Indians, but among savage and barbaric peoples all over the world. But whereas the existence of superstitious customs relating to hair, nails, and other parts of the human body is commonly known, the magical ideas connected with them are by no means equally recognized. To make out these ideas will be my task in the following pages.

At first I shall pay attention to the hair customs, which in South America are multitudinous enough and often rather peculiar. Sometimes the whole hair of the head is shaved off; sometimes it is only removed from certain parts of it, mostly from the top of the head; sometimes it is made up in braids or arranged in some other singular manner. Usually such measures are taken on special important occasions, or at critical epochs of life, such as shortly after birth, at puberty, before marriage, and after a death. Last, but not least, we have to consider the custom of scalping slain enemies or preparing their whole head into a trophy, customs which, as we shall see, are at bottom due to the same superstition as other hair customs.

Deaths are perhaps the occasions on which most commonly the hair is cut, the usage, however, being as a rule confined to the women. When a man dies, custom requires that his wife, his daughters, and often his other female relatives too, should shave off their hair. In Chaco, for instance, this custom is universally practised, at least by the tribes of the Pilcomayo region, the Tobas, the Chorotis, the Matacos, and the Ashluslays. Among these Indians it forms part and parcel of the mourning, a duty especially incumbent on the women. The hair cut off is always burned. On the other hand, among the Chiriguanos widows also cut their hair, but instead of destroying it they scatter it on the tombs of their husbands.[1] Of the Lenguas in the Paraguayan Chaco Mr. Grubb states that on the day of a death all the nearest relatives go into mourning, during which the face is painted black, generally with charcoal, the hair cropped short, and the whole head covered.[1] Similarly, among the Jahgans and the Onas of Tierra del Fuego the nearest relatives not only blacken their face but also cut their hair and draw their blood in mourning.[2] From the northern parts of South America we have many similar reports, especially from Brazil. Thus, when a Karayá Indian dies, his wife and mother cut their hair, leaving a crown of hair round the head. Both sexes also tie basten or cotton bindlets round the head as " signs of sorrow."[3] Among the Puris, the Coroados, and the Coropos, according to von Spix and von Martius, the mourners used either to cut the hair short or make it grow long, the women also painting the whole body black.[4] Likewise, of the Mundrucús von Martius states that when a death takes place the female relatives go into mourning, shaving off their long hair, painting the face black, and wailing for a long time.[5] Of the Caribs of the Antilles de Rochefort states: " As a token of mourning and to show their sorrow on the death of a parent, they cut a part of the hair of their head. If the chief dies, they shave off their hair entirely, and do not allow it to grow again until the corpse has been laid in the grave."[6] Similar practices seem to have prevailed among the ancient Indians of Peru.[7]

---

[1] Del Campana, *Notizie intorno ai Ciriguani* (*Archivio per l'antropologia e la etnologia*, Firenze, 1902), p. 115. Thouar, *Exploration dans l'Amérique du Sud*, p. 50 *sq*.

These instances may be sufficient to illustrate a custom which indeed seems to be almost universal in South America. Just as the Indians paint the face or the whole body in mourning, so they cut the hair on the same occasion, the one as well as the other being mostly confined to the women. Not quite equally widespread, but still common enough, is the practice of cutting the hair of girls when they reach puberty. Of the tribes on the Rio Pilcomayo the Mataco-Guisnays seems to be the only one that practises this custom.[8] On the other hand, it is one of the most important of the puberty ceremonies among the Chiriguanos and the Chanés, who have the same culture. The four or five most critical days, as I have mentioned before, the girl has to spend in her hammock, which is pulled up near the roof of the hut. When the first menstruation is over she is taken down and her hair is entirely shaved off, whereupon she is secluded for months in a special partition of the house.[1] How old the custom of cutting the hair at puberty is among the South American Indians, appears from the fact that Hans Stade found it among the Brazilian Tupis. This ancient traveller states that as soon as a girl was marriageable, her hair was cut off and large incisions were made upon her back; teeth of wild animals were at the same time tied round her neck.[2] By later travellers in Brazil the same custom has frequently been observed. Thus, of the Tecunas on the upper R. Solimoês in north-west Brazil Fernandez de Souza states that " when the girls have their first menstruation they cut their hair and keep them secluded, strictly fasting."[3] The same practice is observed by the tribes of the R. Negro, as appears from the statements of Dr. Koch-Grünberg. Just as the menstruating girl is generally painted black, so it is customary to shave off her hair.[4] Among the Warraus of Guiana the first thing done with the girl as soon as she reached puberty was to deprive her of her long hair, whereupon dances and ceremonial decoration of the girl took place.[5] Similarly, among the Caribs, the elaborate ceremonies performed at the initiation of the girls commenced by burning their hair or cutting it off with a sharp fish bone, as close to the head as possible.[6]

---

[1] Grubb, *An Unknown People in an Unknown Land*, p. 169.

[2] Bove, *Patagonia, Terra del Fuoco*, p. 138. Gallardo, *Los Onas*, p. 319. Among the Onas the scarification as a mourning custom is confined to the women, but both men and women cut their hair. Cp. Gallardo, *op. cit.*, p. 317.

[3] Krause, *In den Wildnissen Brasiliens*, p. 331.

[4] v. Spix and v. Martius, *Reise in Brasilien*, i. 383.

[5] v. Martius, *Beiträge zur Ethnographie Amerika's*, i. 393.

[6] de Rochefort, *Histoire naturelle et morale des Iles Antilles*, p. 432.

[7] See Cieza de León, *La cronica del Perú* (Primera parte), c. 101.

[8] This was told me by a Bolivian explorer, who had visited these Indians. The Mataco-Guisnays live on the left bank of the river near the Bolivian fort Linares. I have not been able to verify the statement.

Like the practice of cutting the hair as a sign of sorrow, the ceremonial hair-cutting at puberty is certainly practised by many more Indian tribes in South America than that of whom it is expressly stated. Before I go on to mention some other practices of the same kind, I shall briefly state the ideas which in my opinion underlie them.

Dr. Preuss and Dr. Koch-Grünberg regard the hair-cutting after a death as a sort of sacrifice made to the dead. The surviving relatives try to propitiate the revengeful spirit by putting themselves in every respect in the most pitiable condition, and for this purpose they, among other things, deprive themselves of their most appreciated ornament, the hair.[1] But this explanation has no better foundation in facts than the other theories concerning the Indian mourning customs (mutilations, etc.) presented by these writers, as will be shown in detail in another chapter. In this connection I shall only point out that both Dr. Preuss and Dr. Koch-Grünberg have overlooked the fact that ceremonial hair-cutting is not practised only as a mourning custom, but also on many other occasions—for instance, with girls at puberty. In this, and in many other cases, it cannot possibly be accounted for by any propitiation-theory. It is quite evident that the hair customs in South America, as in other parts of the world, are due to some special superstition relating to the human hair, and this superstition we have to find out.

---

[1] Del Campana, *op. cit.*, p. 85. Nordenskiöld, *Indianerleben*, p. 210.

[2] *Captivity of Hans Stade of Hesse* (Hakluyt Society), p. 144. Ternaux, *Voyages, relations et mémoires de l'Amérique*, iii. 277. Southey, *History of Brazil*, i. 240.

[3] *Revista Trimensal do Instituto historico y geografico do Brazil*, Serie III. 1848, p. 497.

[4] Koch-Grünberg, *Zwei Jahre unter den Indianern*, i. 111, 181; ii. 64.

[5] Schomburgk, *Reisen in British-Guiana*, i. 168.

[6] Lafitau, *Mœurs des sauvages Amériquains*, i. 291.

In examining carefully the different hair customs, we are in fact forced to the conclusion that they are all based on the same fundamental idea, namely, that *the hair is*, as it were, *the seat of the spirit or soul.* This thesis, however, requires some further explanation. If we may say that, according to primitive belief, the soul is in the hair, this does not mean that the hair of the head is regarded as the *only* seat of the human soul; as a matter of fact, the Indians do not localize it exclusively to any special part of the body. The Indian belief seems to be that in almost every part of the human body there is something of the spirit, or, more properly speaking, of the vital and spiritual energy which animates man while alive. But in certain parts this energy is concentrated in a special way, and in a higher degree than in the rest. This is the case with the whole head, the great importance of which as a material basis for the mental faculties is realized even by the savage.[2] Again, the most critical part of the head is the hair. The hair, according to primitive ideas, is the concentration of the vital and spiritual power of man. To possess a lock of a person's hair is the same thing as to possess his soul, and supernatural influences can easily be wrought upon him through it. To take the scalp of an enemy is to obtain possession of his spirit. For although the spirit is not confined to the hair, there is still—since to a primitive mind a part of a thing represents the whole thing—actually in each case the idea that the scalp-lock is identical with the entire spirit. But there are some other parts of the body of which much the same may be said. Thus, the *nails* partake of the same " sacred " nature as the hair, and are consequently parts through which it is possible to exert supernatural influences upon a man. To cut a nail and throw it away is to throw away a bit of the soul, to guard the nail cut off is to guard the soul. Moreover, the whole surface of the human body, the whole *skin*, is for the same reasons equally important. A man's spirit or soul is concentrated in his skin as it is concentrated in those other extremities of the body, the hair and the nails. And just as the hair of the head is impregnated with spiritual energy, so is also the hair which grows from other parts of the body. Not only is the Indian extremely careful with the hair on the top of his head; he deals in the same mysteriously careful manner with his eyebrows, with the hair growing on his lips, on his chin, under his arms, and round his genitals: in each tiny hair, or tuft of hair, there is contained something of his spirit which, according to the principle *pars pro toto*, may represent his whole spirit and his whole being.[1]

---

[1] Preuss, *Menschenopfer und Selbstverstümmelung bei der Todtentrauer in Amerika* (*Festschrift für Adolf Bastian*, 1896), pp. 223, 224. Koch, *Zum Animismus der sydamerikanischen Indianer* (*Intern. Archiv f. Ethnographie*, Bd. XIII. Supplement), p. 74.

[2] Some taboo prescriptions with regard to eating the heads of animals on certain critical occasions evidently depend on this belief. If, for instance, an evil spirit is supposed to be incarnated in a certain animal, the *head* of that animal is considered particularly dangerous to feed on. Thus, the Tobas told me that if a menstruous woman eats the head of a parrot, she will go mad. Likewise, among the same Indians, the father of a newborn child must not eat the head of a cow, for then his delicate offspring will die. Again, Mr. Grubb says

---

that, among the Lenguas, mothers are not allowed to partake of soups made from the heads of animals, because they are supposed to have bad effects (*op. cit.*, p. 137). In all similar cases there is evidently the idea that the dangerous spirit is especially present in the head of the animal.

[1] It would not be difficult to show that the same ideas underlie such hair customs in other parts of the world also. The most classical example of the belief that the human spirit is concentrated in the hair we have in the Old Testament in the case of Samson, whose wonderful strength depended on his long hair, and who lost his strength as soon as the hair was cut. Likewise, when among some uncivilized peoples custom requires that priests and sorcerers should let their hair grow long, this is due to similar ideas: the " holiness " or supernatural power which the sorcerer wants in his communication with the spiritual world is concentrated in his hair. To cut the hair would be to stunt his power. In South America I have found only one instance of this, in the case of the Araucanians, of whom it is stated that their priests wear " large mantles and long hair " (Medina, *Aborigenes de Chile*, p. 242).

Exactly the same may be said of the skin and hair of animals. Even the animals are animated by a soul or spirit—mostly, if not always, an incarnated human spirit, as we shall see later on—which is especially collected at the surface of the body. Thus the Indian, who wraps himself up in the skin of the animal killed in hunting, believes he will incorporate with himself the strength of that animal, just as by adorning himself with the scalp of his slain enemy he believes he will acquire his spiritual strength.

What the savage belief is due to, that the spirit or soul is particularly seated in such parts of the human or animal body as the hair or fell, the nails and the claws, may be more difficult to explain. Yet certain observations are unquestionably likely to give some support to such an idea. The hair, like the nails and the claws, grows rapidly, and during the whole life; even when cut short all grow again, and soon attain their former size. It is therefore natural that the savage should infer that the vital power which animates the living body and causes its growth has more actuality in these parts, or that *the vitality of the human and the animal body*, as it were, *flows towards its extremities and is concentrated in these.* This explanation is consistent with the observation Schomburgk makes on this point with special reference to the Macusis of Guiana. "All Indians," he says, "ascribe special magical virtues to the hair, feathers, teeth, and claws of certain animals, because they believe that their renewal and regrowth can only be granted by a higher power, and therefore can be transferred from these parts to other beings."[1]

The correctness of the above explanation is confirmed by many facts of Indian life, and, *vice versa*, only this theory accounts fully for the many curious practices relating to hair, nails, and skins. As to hair-cutting as a mourning custom, I think that the explanation which was given me by some Chaco Indians holds true of all South American tribes. To understand it, we must first of all consider that if there really is the belief that the human spirit is especially seated in the hair, and that by obtaining a lock of a man's hair one can obtain possession of his whole being, it is natural that the evil spirits should take an especial interest in that part of the body. It is, as it were, the Achilles' heel of a person, his most vulnerable point, and therefore liable to be particularly attacked by the supernatural enemies. From this it follows that, when an Indian is in a delicate and critical situation, he must take special care of his hair. Just as after the death of a near relative the Indian fasts or keeps diet, for fear lest the malignant ghost should hide in the food and through it obtain entrance into his body, so his precaution to cut the hair on this occasion is due to similar considerations. When I asked the Chorotis why a widow cuts and destroys her hair, I received the answer that the dead husband, who wants his wife to follow him to the grave, is believed to attack her through the hair; in order to rid herself of this danger she shaves it off. Exactly the same belief prevails among the Tobas: the dead husband or father may seize his surviving wife or daughter by the hair and cause her to fall ill and die. Among the Tobas a widow cuts her hair twice, the second time some months later on after the hair has again grown long. At the same time she repeats the wailing. The one as well as the other is a renewed precaution against the dangerous spirit of the dead.

---

[1] Schomburgk, quoted by v. Martius, *Beiträge zur Ethnographie Amerika's*, i. 649 *seq.*

The custom of cutting the hair at mourning is probably due to similar reasons among all Indian peoples. Thus, when it is stated that among the Mosquito Indians in Central America a woman cuts off her hair after the death of her husband because she does not like to keep anything which the deceased has once held in his hand,[1] this is in accordance with the above explanation. The hair is a vital part with the woman, and the departed husband may claim his wife through it.

When we hear that the Chiriguano widows do not destroy the hair cut off, but scatter it on the tomb of their dead husband, this is no evidence against the theory I have set forth. The Chiriguanos do not fear their dead in the same degree as most other Indian peoples. In their wailing and other funeral ceremonies we can also trace something of real sorrow. The offering of the hair is not in this case a precaution against the revengeful spirit of the dead, as among other Chaco tribes, but perhaps only an act of devotion, a sort of self-sacrifice. The widow offers her hair as a substitute for herself, since from a primitive point of view it seems natural that a wife should follow her husband to the grave.

The explorer Dr. Campos relates that among some Chaco tribes in the Pilcomayo region marriage is contracted in the way that the chief cuts off a lock of hair from each party and unites them, their owners being therewith considered as husband and wife.[2] Although

---

[1] Bell in *Journ. of the Roy. Geogr. Soc.*, 1862, p. 255.

[2] Campos, *De Tarija a la Asunción*, p. 258.

I have not noticed such a custom among the tribes visited by me, it is not at all improbable that it has been practised formerly, at least occasionally. The hair-locks of the contracting parties represented their souls, and the union between these symbolized that close union between their whole beings which is the essence of marriage.

The fact that in most cases only *women* cut their hair in mourning is due to ideas pointed out in the previous chapter. Woman is even to the savage the " weaker vessel," more delicate and more exposed to evil spirits than man because of the mysterious natural processes to which she is subject, and has therefore to be more careful in every way. This also makes us understand why the hair of girls is cut at the attainment of puberty. This epoch of life, as we have seen, is extremely critical for the young woman; evil spirits are lurking everywhere ready to attack her. The custom of removing her hair at puberty among some Indian tribes is a manifestation of the same caution which prompts others to cover her head during the critical days. In the latter case the idea is that the demons may be prevented from entering the girl through the face, or attaching themselves to her hair; in the first case the danger is averted from the girl by totally removing the most exposed part of her body. That the arrangement of the hair of women at puberty and menstruation is connected with superstitious ideas, may also be inferred from the custom of the Araucanian women, who, according to an ancient writer, generally kept their hair loose, but at their menstrual periods wore it tied up.[1]

To illustrate the Indian idea of nails a few facts may be mentioned. The Tobas told me that they formerly practised the following mourning custom: When a woman died, her eldest son cut off one of his nails, threaded a string through it, and hung it like a collar round the neck of a dog which carried it away. This was done because it was believed that the spirit of the dead woman would enter into the nail of her son and kill him in the shape of a tiger into which it would transform itself. By cutting off the nail this could be prevented. The dog which carried the nail away would meet some other tribesman, but the spirit contained in the nail would do him no harm, for the spirits of the dead are harmful only to the nearest relatives. The Indian who told me this added that this custom is no longer practised by his people because nowadays men very seldom are killed by tigers,

[1] de Laet, *Guilielmi Pisonis de Medicina Brasilensi, libri quatuor . . . cum appendice de Tapuyis et Chilensibus*, p. 283.

and hence the belief that the dead transform themselves into such animals has lost its foundation.[1]

This interesting statement, it seems to me, is highly characteristic of the Indian ideas as to nails. That the spirit of the dead was supposed to enter into apparently so insignificant a part of the son's body as the nail of his finger, was certainly not an accident. The belief was evidently connected with the idea, before pointed out, that nails share with hair the character of being the seat of the soul and therefore particularly vulnerable points.

Among the Colorados Indians in western Ecuador, when an Indian is to become the godfather of another man's child, he cuts off a bit of the child's nail and swallows it, together with some brandy, the new relationship between him and the child being thereby established. This custom also is founded on the belief that the soul of a person is seated in his nails.

The ancient Indians of Peru had curious superstitions with regard to hair and nails, as appears, for instance, from the following statement of Garcilasso de la Vega's: "They were extremely careful to put in safety their nails and the hair which they cut or pulled out with the comb. They used to hide them in rents or holes of the walls, and if occasionally, in the course of time, these hair-locks and nails fell to the ground and an Indian noticed it, he at once picked them up and put them in again." Garcilasso adds that, according to the belief of the Incas, this precaution would facilitate the future resurrection of the dead, since for this resurrection it was necessary that these essential parts of the body were found without delay.[2] The ancient Peruvians, moreover, practised a custom with the hair and nails of their small children which is illustrative of the superstition we are dealing with. When the child was about two years old it was weaned with great feasts and ceremonies. The first hairs as well as the nails of the infant, which up to then had not been touched, were solemnly cut off by the eldest uncle and thereafter kept with great care. On the same occasion a name was given the child.[3] The fact is interesting because the gist of the whole ceremony evidently was to deposit the child's soul, as represented by its hair and nails, for safe keeping in some secure place outside of it. Just as a civilized father might deposit a sum of money for the benefit of his young son to be used in a future case of necessity, so the Indian father keeps the hair and nails of his little offspring for the sake of guarding him against the mysterious dangers to which he may become exposed in his life.[1] If the soul is believed to be seated in the hair, we can understand why human hair is so often used by Indian wizards for practising nefarious magic. Thus, among the Aymará of the present day, when an Indian wants to harm an enemy, he procures a lock of his hair or a piece of his nail, and inters them in a tomb, being sure that the *chullpa* or death-spirit residing in the tomb will take hold of the person to whom the hair or the nail has belonged. For this reason it is, among these Indians, very difficult to get samples of Indian hair, just as it is difficult to get their photographs.[2]

---

[1] Karsten, *The Toba Indians of the Bolivian Gran Chaco* (*Acta Academiæ Aboënsis.* Humaniora, iv.), p. 96 *sq.*

[2] Garcilasso de la Vega, *Comentarios reales*, bk. ii., c. 7.

[3] Cieza de León, *op. cit.*, c. 65. Garcilasso de la Vega, *op. cit.*, bk. iv., c. 11. Cobo, *Historia del nuevo mundo*, iv. 177.

The common Indian custom of removing the hair from certain other parts of the body, from above the eyes, from the lips and the chin, from under the arms and from the genital parts, probably owes its origin to similar superstitious ideas. Indians with moustaches or beards are extremely rare in all parts of South America, and likewise, the removal of the eyebrows or eyelashes and the pubes is, if not the general rule, at least a very common thing. In Chaco, for instance, the Ashluslays, the Chorotis, and the Matacos are in the habit of pulling off carefully every hair which grows up from their face, and the pubes are likewise invariably shaved off. The Indians express their view on this point, as they usually do in similar cases, by saying that such hair is " ugly " (*häes*, *häis*), but for things which they call ugly there is generally some underlying superstitious idea. What holds true of the Chaco Indians, is also reported of many other South American tribes. Thus the Jesuit Father Gumilla, speaking of the Indians of the Orinoco, says that neither men nor women allow any hair to grow on their face; even the eyebrows both sexes pull out by the roots. An exception to this rule, says the same author, are the Achaguas, who make themselves a sort of artificial tattooed moustache. This occupies the whole place where normally the moustache grows, being drawn in a semicircle round the mouth so that the ends nearly meet under the chin.[3] The idea of these tattooed moustaches is the same as that of all tattooings—to protect a critical part, in this case the mouth, against supernatural intruders. Again, of the Botocudos the Prince of Wied-Neuwied states that "many of them pull off eyebrows and beard by the root, whereas others allow them to grow or only shave them off. Women never allow any hair to grow on their body."[1] Similarly, Sir Everard F. im Thurn, speaking of the Indian tribes of Guiana, says on the same point: "Another way in which all Indians interfere with their bodies is by pulling out by the roots the very few hairs which grow anywhere but on their scalps. Even the eyebrows are not unfrequently sacrificed in this way."[2]

---

[1] The hiding of the *name* among the Indians often has the same significance. The child's soul is in its name, and the latter is hidden in order to keep the soul safe.

[2] Nordenskiöld, " Recettes magiques et médicales de Pérou et de la Bolivie," in *Journal de la Société des Américanistes de Paris*, nouvelle serie, tome iv., numéro 2, p. 14.

[3] Gumilla, *Historia natural de las naciones del Rio Orinoco*, i. 129.

It is, of course, very difficult to prove in each case that these customs of removing the hair are actually due to superstition. There are very few direct statements to this effect, and the Indians, if they give any explanation at all, usually express their opinion on such things by circumlocution. Yet it seems to me highly suggestive when we hear, for instance, of the Araucanians in Chile that "if their eyelids and their arms shiver they hold it to be a very bad presage; and if the left arm of an Indian trembles when he goes out to battle, he returns, considering it to be a very bad sign."[3] In Chaco, for instance, among the Chorotis, there is prevalent the belief that if at hunting the arm fails, being too weak to draw the bow, this is a sign that there is an evil spirit in the limb, and the Indian then tries to rid himself of the demon through bleeding it. Similarly, we may assume, the Araucanians believed that the shivering and trembling of the eyelid and the arm were due to some evil demon, who was attacking these parts. It was not, therefore, worth while going out to war failing the most important conditions for success, a keen sight and a firm arm. The same idea was, I believe, held by the Guaycurús of Paraguay, when they declared that they pulled off their eyelashes "in order to get a clearer sight."[4] As the eye is the most delicate part of the body, so the sight is the most important of the senses. The Indian, therefore, as I have pointed out, usually protects it against malign influences by painting, tattooing marks, or by other means. The spot itself, where normally the eyebrows grow, is generally painted. It is also significant that the

---

[1] Wied-Neuwied, *Reise nach Brasilien*, ii. 4.
[2] Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p. 193.
[3] Rosales, *Historia general de el Reyno de Chile*, i. 165.
[4] Charlevoix, *Historia del Paraguay*, i. 136.

Ashluslay Indians in Chaco, who likewise remove their eyebrows, are in the habit of pricking the spot above the eyes repeatedly with a sharp wood splinter in order to get a keener sight to find the nests of the bees.[1] The Indian custom of bleeding, as we shall see later on, is mostly, if not always, founded on magical ideas.

Dobrizhoffer, speaking of the couvade of the Abipones, mentions a curious idea prevailing among them. According to the principles of the couvade, any carelessness on the part of the father is supposed to influence badly the newborn offspring. Hence, if the child comes to a premature end, its death is attributed by the women to the father's intemperance, this or that cause being assigned. One of the sins he is blamed for in such a case is that *he has neglected to shave off his long eyebrows*.[2] If we did not know the Indian superstition with regard to hair it would certainly be impossible to realize how the long eyebrows of the father could cause his little son to fall ill and die. Now, I think, we may offer a very probable explanation. The evil spirits, who are in movement at birth, get hold of the father's soul through his long eyebrows which are as critical a part of his body as the hair of the head, and, according to the ideas underlying the couvade, this means that they also get hold of his little offspring. As a newborn child is more delicate than a full-grown man, the attack of the demons will prove fatal to the former. This explanation may seem far-fetched, but it is quite logical from the Indian's point of view, and quite consistent with his magical ideas.

Hans Stade relates that when he was about to be killed and eaten by the Tupis, they shaved off both his beard and his eyebrows.[3] This custom, which also occurs among other anthropophagous tribes, was probably due to the superstitious ideas pointed out above. Since the spirit of the slain enemy is highly feared, it may be considered important to secure some vital parts of his body before killing him, in order to control his soul through these.

In view of such and similar facts, it is highly probable that the removal of the pubes is likewise due to superstitious considerations, even if the suggestion cannot be strictly proved. The genitals are, as we know, extremely critical parts, especially for the women, and there are direct evidences to the effect that evil spirits sometimes try to enter them through the pudenda. Now if the hair is a thing which especially attracts the demons, it is natural that it should be removed from these parts. Thus Professor von den Steinen mentions that among the Bakaïri of the Rio Xingú the pubes of the girls were carefully removed at the first menstruation, at which bandages or triangular basten coverings, the *uluris*, were applied.[1] When we know the Indian ideas about menstruation, we may be sure that this removal of the pubes was not undertaken for purely hygienic reasons, but first of all for some superstitious reasons; and it is probably so in all similar cases.

---

[1] Nordenskiöld, *Indianerleben*, pp. 54, 78.

[2] Dobrizhoffer, *Geschichte der Abiponer*, ii. 275.

[3] *The Captivity of Hans Stade of Hesse* (Hakluyt Society), p. 63.

To return to the customs practised with the hair of the head, I shall adduce some more instances to illustrate the prevailing Indian ideas.

Father Lozano, describing various Chaco tribes belonging to the Guaycurú-group (Mocobís, Tobas, Agoyas, etc.), gives an account of the peculiar way of dressing the hair of the head which was characteristic of all these Indians in his time. Shortly after the birth, he says, the mothers began to pluck off the hair from the heads of their children of both sexes, opening a path about three inches wide from the forehead to the top of the head. The hair was torn out by the root, so that it never grew again on that spot. Some did not content themselves with this path through the hair, but pulled it out from the whole fore-part of the head for a space of about four inches. Some of the Mataguayes shaved off the hair from the crown of the head, making themselves a sort of tonsure.[2] Lozano's statement that this hair fashion was considered very beautiful certainly cannot be taken as a real explanation. He himself adds a detail which clearly indicates that the custom was based upon some superstition, whatever this may have been. He says that some of the women were reluctant to submit themselves to this very painful operation, but still did it from necessity and a superstitious fear. In order that the women may shave their head, we are told, the devil used to appear to them in the shape of an Indian woman who came from the forest with the warning that those who did not allow their heads to be shaved could not eat fish, for *if they ate fish without having their hair shaved in this way they would die.*[3] Now we know that certain superstitious ideas with regard to fish are especially characteristic of the Indians belonging to the Guaycurú-group. I found this old superstition myself among one of the most important tribes of the group, the Tobas in Bolivia, and they also gave me the explanation of it. Among the Tobas, women abstain from eating fish after the death of a male relative[1] and at menstruation, because it is feared lest the evil spirit should hide in the belly of the fish and get entrance into their body. It is, then, clear that this peculiar arrangement of the hair was supposed to be able to paralyze the dangerous consequences ensuing from eating fish, or, in short, that it was a charm against evil spirits. The cause of this supernatural effect may be difficult to assign. Evidently the mark itself acted as a deterrent in the same way as tattooing marks, scars, cross-figures, etc. But it must also be observed that according to the Indian idea the fore-part and the crown of the head are evidently the most critical parts, and most exposed to malign influences, and therefore are particularly made clean from hair.

---

[1] v. d. Steinen, *Unter den Naturvölkern Central-Brasiliens*, p. 198.

[2] Lozano, *Descripción chorographica de las Provincias del Gran Chaco*, pp. 80, 81.

[3] Lozano, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

Dobrizhoffer describes the same custom from among the Abipones in the following way: " All, both men and women, pluck up the hair from the forehead to the crown of the head, so that the fore-part is bald almost for the space of two inches." He adds that this was called *nalemrá* in the Abipone language, and that it was a " religious mark,"[2] but he does not state wherein the religious character lay. What struck him much was that all the Abipones had a cross " marked on their foreheads," a custom which they had practised before they got acquainted with the Christian religion.[3] Whatever may have been the origin of this cross-mark, there is good reason for assuming that it served the same purpose as the *nalemrá:* to ward off evil influences from the head.

Again, Charlevoix, speaking of some other Indians of Paraguay, mentions a similar custom practised with small children as well as with young men when they were made warriors. As he calls these Indians Guaycurús, it is not quite clear of which particular tribes he is speaking,[4] but they were in any case closely related to those

[1] Lozano, in his *Historia de la Compañia de Jesús en la Provincia de Paraguay*, i. 101, mentions the same superstition, relating to the ancient Tobas in the neighbourhood of Tucumán; after the death of her husband a woman had to fast rigorously, abstaining especially from fish.

[2] Dobrizhoffer, *An Account of the Abipones*, ii. 17.

[3] Dobrizhoffer, *op. cit.*, ii. 20.

[4] The name Guaycurú does not denote any particular tribe, but is a generic appellation for a whole group comprising some of the most important tribes in Chaco, to which amongst others the Abipones, the Tobas, the Mocobís, and the Pilagás belonged. Cp. Lafone Quevedo, *Arte de la lengua Toba*, p. 4.

described by Lozano and Dobrizhoffer. In the same degree as the hair of the newborn child grew, he says, it was pulled out with exception of what was necessary to form a small crest of hair on the top of the head and two thin crowns around it. When the boy was sixteen or seventeen years old he was initiated as a warrior. The ceremony was performed by some distinguished veteran who began to pull out the hair from one of the two crowns. Thereafter he pricked him on various parts of the body with a sharp-pointed bone, and with the flowing blood smeared his head. Then he seized the hair-crest in the middle of the head, pulled it with all his might as tightly as possible, and enwrapped it in a net. Lastly, the whole body of the novice was smeared with a certain red clay. When the man was twenty years old he was admitted among the older warriors. On this occasion the hair was again dressed: the whole crest of hair was cut off and the remaining crown was reduced until it was only one inch wide. He moreover painted himself from head to foot in various colours, tied a band of red twist round his head, adorned himself with plumes, and so forth.[1] When we compare all these arrangements with each other, we cannot have much doubt as to the magical character of the one as well as of the other. Just as the red cotton band and the painting were charms or amulets against all sorts of evil influences, so the peculiar arrangement of the hair served a similar end. To understand the whole thing properly we must know what initiation in general means to the Indian, and particularly what the initiation into the military profession meant for a warlike race such as the Guaycurús. The first hair ceremony shortly after birth, connected with piercing the lips and the ear-lobes, was a " baptism " of the same religious and magical significance as such ceremonies always are: to ward off the supernatural dangers which are constantly threatening the little delicate offspring. The later initiations for the military profession likewise had a religious character. A warrior must be a man of great physical and spiritual power of resistance, for he has to fight not only against visible enemies, but also against invisible malignant spirits, and the initiation essentially aims at hardening him against the latter. The two different initiations mentioned marked different stages in this hardening, the measures taken with the hair being the second time more detailed. This dangerous appendix to the body was, at every initiation in life, more and more reduced, until at last there was little or nothing left. Especially significant with regard to the ideas underlying these ceremonies was the procedure of smearing the young warrior's hair with blood. The blood acted as a protecting charm for the head and gave it strength.

---

[1] Charlevoix, *Historia del Paraguay*, i. 135-138. Cp. Boggiani, *I Caduvei*, p. 295.

If a warrior must have a special power of resistance against evil spirits, this, of course, is still more the case with a chief. The official position he holds in the community, particularly as a leader in war, makes him more exposed to the attacks of malevolent supernatural powers than other people, and more in need of certain means of protection against them. It is from this point of view that we have to explain the "initiation" for chieftainship as well as all other ceremonies—dances, drinking feasts, etc.—at the nomination of chiefs. At present we are only concerned with the arrangements sometimes made with the hair of the new-elected leader. Among the Abipones, for instance, the *nalemrá* of a chief was made much larger than that of other people, a broad bald path being opened from the forehead to the back of the head. Various other ceremonies were also performed on this occasion.[1] The Chiriguano chief, *tubicha*, formerly was distinguished by a special hair ornament, called *yattira*, which consisted of a crest of hair on the crown of the head, much like that used by some Guaycurú tribes. Some other insignia worn by him, as the pendants of small green stones hanging from his ears,[2] also suggest the magical character of all these ornaments, for the green stones were certainly amulets. Moreover, a similar *yattira* was worn by young girls at the age when they particularly stand in need of protecting charms against mysterious evil influences.[3]

The idea that the forehead and the crown are the most exposed parts of the head has not only given rise to the use of special headgears, but also to the custom of making the hair into a sort of tonsure. Such tonsures are known even from among the ancient Tupis in Brazil, who, according to Hans Stade, used to shave off the hair on the top of the head, and only leave a crown of hair like the monks.[4] The hairdressing of the Bakaïri men, according to Professor von den Steinen, is "a calotte with tonsure." "Whereas the Suyá are wont to shave the forehead bald and have the tonsure of St. Paul, all the Kulisèhu men have the tonsure of the Apostle Peter, a circular bare spot on the crown of the head, about seven inches in diameter." The magical character of these tonsures which, of course, have nothing to do with Catholic or Christian ideas, may be inferred also from the fact that they are made at the time when the boys reach puberty.[1] The Caribs in the mainland of Guiana, says von Humboldt, "have their hair cut in the same characteristic way as monks and choir-boys." The forehead is partly shaved bald, which makes it look very high. Only at the vertex a strong, circular crest of hair begins.[2] A similar tonsure on the crown and the back of the head was made by the ancient Peruvians of the Inca empire in connection with the practice of flattening the head.[3]

---

[1] Dobrizhoffer, *op. cit.*, ii. 443.

[2] Corrado, *El colegio franciscano de Tarija*, p. 53.

[3] Corrado, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

[4] *The Captivity of Hans Stade of Hesse* (Hakluyt Society), p. 136. Ternaux, *Voyages, relations et mémoires de l'Amérique*, iii. 267-268.

Again, among the tribes of the Rio Yapurá Dr. Koch-Grünberg found the custom of braiding the hair in a special way. The long soft hair was parted in the middle and wrapped up in a strap of tree bast so as to form a sort of pig-tail.[4] The same mode of hairdressing was used by the Bará of the Macucú-Igarapé, and, according to Koch-Grünberg, the use of such pig-tails was formerly a general custom among the tribes of the Rio Caiary-Uaupés.[5] Likewise, the same custom prevails among all Jibaro tribes in eastern Ecuador, the men arranging their long hair into three pig-tails, one large at the neck and two smaller at the temples. These pig-tails are supposed to give the Jibaro strength and courage; without them he is not a real man. No Jibaro, therefore, would start for a war, for a hunting expedition, for a visit, or for some other long journey, without having his hair arranged after this fashion. A Jibaro who keeps his hair loose looks sickly and weak, and is in danger of being bewitched by the evil eye of his secret enemies. On the other hand, on occasions when the Jibaro has to observe ceremonial abstinence—for instance, after the slaying of an enemy—he cannot have his hair made into pig-tails, but must wear it loose. He then, in a manner, has to behave like a "penitentiary," and must not challenge the revengeful spirit through his head-dress, as he must not challenge him through his other ornaments or his weapons. Of special interest are the basten strips with which the hair or the pig-tails are tied round. The bast and bark of certain trees has exactly the same significance as the human skin and the skin or fell of animals; the spirit of the tree is concentrated on its surface. This belief gives all strips and bandages of bast and rind great importance as charms, and as such they are certainly widely used by the Indians. The hair wrapped up with the basten strip is made into a magical thing which possesses the power of keeping off evil influences.

---

[1] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

[2] A. von Humboldt, quoted by v. Martius, *Beiträge zur Ethnographie Amerika's*, i. 742.

[3] Garcilasso de la Vega, *op. cit.*, bk. ix., c. 8. See also Gomara, *Historia de las Indias* (*Biblioteca de autores Españoles*, tomo xxii.), p. 224. Zárate, *Historia del Peru* (*Biblioteca de autores Españoles*, tomo xxvi.), p. 464.

[4] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, ii. 283.

[5] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 328.

The religious and magical ideas which have suggested the above hair customs have probably also given rise to the practice of flattening or otherwise deforming the skull, which, in South America, has the same characteristic geographical diffusion as the mummification of the dead and some other peculiar customs. Its main centres have been in those western lands which formerly composed the Inca empire, first of all Peru and Ecuador. Although Garcilasso de la Vega, faithful to his endeavour to represent the Inca reys as enlightened promoters of civilization, says that they severely prohibited this barbaric custom, it is certain that it commonly flourished all over the empire. This is best shown by the excavations recently made, especially in Peru and Ecuador, whereby a considerable number of skulls have been brought to light which display clear traces of deliberate deformation.[1] Garcilasso himself gives a good description of the way in which the flattening was brought about among one of the Peruvian tribes. The procedure began directly after birth. The head of the newborn child was compressed between two boards, one placed on the forehead, the other on the back of the head, the ligature being drawn tighter for every day until the child was about four or five years old. In this way the frontal became directed obliquely back and the whole skull got a peculiarly elongated form.[2]

In more recent times the Omaguas in Ecuador are known to have practised the artificial deformation of the skull, as is testified by von Spix and other travellers. Ligatures, applied to the front and the back of the child's head at an early age, ultimately gave it " the form of a mitre."[1] Even in our own days the custom, according to several writers, prevails among the Conibos on the Rio Ucayali.[2]

---

[1] See, for instance, Reiss and Stübel, *The Necropolis of Ancon in Peru*, vol. iii., plates 111-116. Tirado, *Los Quimbayas*, p. 32. Gonzalez Suarez, *Los Aborigenes de Imbabura y del Carchi*, p. 77.

[2] Garcilasso de la Vega, *op. cit.*, bk. ix., c. 8. Cieza de León, *op. cit.*, c. 50. Cobo, *Historia del nuevo mundo*, iv. 175.

When we have to explain this custom we again meet with the difficulty that there is no direct evidence bearing on its origin. Yet the ancient writers give some details which seem to indicate that it was due to the same superstitions as the custom of shaving the hair of the head. Cieza de León, speaking of the Manta Indians, says that they believed that the flattening of the head would make their children " more healthy and more able to work."[3] Again, Garcilasso, who mentions the custom with reference to the same savage tribe, adds that they did not content themselves with thus deforming the heads of their children; they also shaved off the hair from the top of the head, leaving it only to grow on both sides.[4] The expression that they would be " more healthy and more able to work " through this operation seems to show that there was a superstition behind it. Evidently it was thought that the evil spirits could not get hold of the most delicate and most exposed part of the child's body, its head, after it was given this odd shape, an explanation which is confirmed by the further precaution to shave off a part of the hair. We are also told that another savage Peruvian tribe, the Collas (Aymara), not only made the head extremely sharp-pointed, but also covered it afterwards with a curiously shaped head-gear, called *chuco*, which was a sort of hat without a brim, very high and sharp-pointed. The twist for this hat was spun, and the whole hat made, with many ceremonies and superstitions, and such also accompanied its first employment.[5] In this hat, the object of which obviously was to protect the head against mysterious evils, we find interesting evidence to show that even head-gears have sometimes been worn for superstitious reasons, a fact that I shall later on illustrate with some more instances.

The most important class of customs relating to hair and head still remains to be dealt with: the custom of scalping and of making head-trophies. Scalping, as we know, is not practised in South

---

[1] v. Spix and v. Martius, *op. cit.*, iii. 1187. v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 438.

[2] Grandidier, *Voyage dans l'Amérique du Sud*, pp. 128, 129. Reich und Stegelmann, "Bei den Indianern des Urubamba und des Envira," in *Globus*, Bd. LXXXIII., 1903, p. 134. Church, *Aborigines of South America*, p. 185.

[3] "Porque serian mas sanos y para mas trabajo" (Cieza de León, *op. cit.*, c. 50).

[4] Garcilasso de la Vega, *op. cit.*, bk. ix., c. 8.

[5] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 175. Cieza de León, *op. cit.*, c. 100.

America even approximately to the same extent as among the North American Indians; in fact, it is limited to the Gran Chaco and a small district in Guiana.[1] But scalping is probably only a later development of the other custom, that of preparing the whole head into a sort of trophy, and this is widely practised nearly all over South America.[2] That the scalp is closely connected with the head-trophy also appears from the practices of the Chaco Indians. They are not only scalp-hunters, but likewise appreciate the heads of their enemies. The whole head of the slain enemy is usually cut off and taken home to be prepared. The scalp is carefully stripped off from the skull and dried, but the latter is also kept and sometimes used as a drinking-cup. The magical idea is in both cases the same: the spirit or soul of the killed enemy is collected in the whole head, but the hairy surface, as it were, is the cream of the thing, and particularly saturated with spiritual power.

Although most South American Indians have been in the habit of making trophies of human heads, the custom has especially flourished among certain warlike peoples in the western and northern parts of the continent. Thus the Araucanians of Chile, the peoples belonging to the Inca empire in Peru and Ecuador, as well as the Quimbayas, the Chibchas, and the tribes of the Cauca valley in Colombia have, according to the testimony of ancient and modern travellers, been most pronounced head-trophy hunters. In our own days the Jibaros of Ecuador are particularly famous for their head-trophies and the ceremonies accompanying their use. Numerous traces of the same custom have likewise been found among the Brazilian tribes. The ancient Tupis not only were dreadful cannibals, but also used to prepare the heads of their slain enemies into trophies and their bones into flutes. The same may be said of all Guarani peoples, to whom the Tupis were closely related. Of the Brazilian Indians, however, the Mundrucús of the Rio Tapayos are best known as takers of human trophies; they are, in fact, next to the Jibaros, the most famous of all South American head-hunters in recent times.

When in the following pages I give an analysis of the custom of scalping and preparing head-trophies, I shall for choice deal with those peoples among whom it is most prominent and of whom we have the best accounts, especially with the Jibaros in Ecuador. The latter have been visited by many travellers and of their trophy customs and ceremonies also we have some information, although only from one single tribe.[1]

---

[1] Friederici, *Skalpieren und ähnliche Kriegsgebräuche in Amerika*, p. 30.

[2] See Friederici, *op. cit.*, p. 84 *sqq.*

The Jibaros prepare their mummified head-trophies, or *tsantsas*, with great skill. At first the head is severed from the trunk, and the hairy scalp as well as the skin of the face is carefully stripped off from the underlying cranial and facial skeleton, which is by-and-by extracted. The trophy is thereafter dried and gradually shrunk over hot stones, of which each in succession is smaller than the previous one, until it is about the size of a newborn child's head. During all these operations the original features of the face are preserved with remarkable exactness.

The ceremonies which accompany the first use of the *tsantsas* are rather complicated and of long duration. Here I shall first of all describe the ceremonies in vogue among the Jibaros in the neighbourhood of Gualaquiza in south-eastern Ecuador.

As soon as a warrior has slain an enemy, he knows that he must prepare himself to celebrate the deed with a special feast together with his friends and neighbours. This first feast has a preliminary character and is called *entrada*. An old Indian, who is especially selected for these functions, gives the warrior a decoction of tobacco to drink. The ceremony gives rise to a drinking-feast which lasts for many days. From this moment the owner of the trophy submits himself to a rigorous fast; he must abstain from eating any game killed with an arrow, as well as from certain other animals and birds. He can only eat fish, manioc, bananas, and certain small birds. He paints his body with black lines, and on his face he wears a black stroke, which is drawn from one ear to the other, passing over the upper lip. He also must strictly abstain from sexual intercourse.

This painful abstinence is scrupulously observed by the Jibaro warrior for a long time, varying between some months and two years, or for the whole time necessary for the preparations of the feast proper. The preparations mainly consist in planting manioc and bananas, in brewing an enormous quantity of *chicha* (beer), and in arranging hunting and fishing expeditions in order to secure a good supply of food for the invited guests.

The ritual of the feast is described as follows: The old warrior, the master of the ceremonies, seats himself in the middle of the house, and the hero of the day enters armed with his lance and carrying the *tsantsa* in his left hand. The old man rises, takes the head, and dips it successively in a decoction of tobacco, in a bowl of *chicha*, and lastly in pure water. The owner of the head now seats himself, and the old warrior pours into him *à la régalade* of all these liquids. This ceremony is called to " close the fast," and, thanks to it, the man can now freely eat of everything. He thereafter rises, seizes his trophy and suspends it on the principal post of the house, which is adorned with flowers, stuffed birds, and a number of other small ornaments. At this moment the old warrior starts to speak, improvising a panegyric of the victor. When his harangues are finished, all the men grasp each other by the hands, form a long chain in the interior of the house, and start to dance, hopping and marching. Generally none of the women, save the wife of the hero of the day, is allowed to take part in this dance. Each time the victor dances, the old man takes the *tsantsa* down from the post and hangs it round his neck.

---

[1] The statements of different writers on the Jibaros have been compiled by Dr. P. Rivet in his treatise, *Les Indiens Jibaros* (*L'Anthropologie*, vols. xviii. and xix., 1907, 1908).

After these initial ceremonies a feast of rejoicing begins, with much eating and drinking, which is continued in an infernal noise for about six days.[1]

In some few details the above ceremonies may vary among different Jibaro tribes. Thus, for instance, in some places the *tsantsa* is not washed in the tobacco solution and the beer, but is instead painted black.[2]

Dr. Rivet, whom I have chiefly followed in this description, says that he cannot make out the exact significance of this feast of the *tsantsa*, and briefly declares that it has an expiatory character, being a kind of reparation to the dead. Some more intimate acquaintance with the psychology of the Indian will, however, I think, enable us to give a fuller account of these ceremonies. The fundamental idea underlying them is, that the spirit or soul of the slain enemy is contained in the head taken by the victor. The trophy may therefore, owing to the magical power possessed by it, become a specially lucky thing for the latter. But this is not unconditionally the case; at first it has to be properly prepared. The revengeful spirit of the killed enemy is, of course, normally extremely dangerous to the man who has obtained possession of it. These dangerous properties must therefore be removed or neutralized by a special act of conjuration, which completely makes the conquered spirit the slave of its owner. That the aim of the ceremonies of the *entrada* is essentially to neutralize the evil effects arising from the inimical spirit, appears clearly from what is said about the unfortunate consequences which would follow in case they were neglected. These consequences are the same as those ensuing from any breaking of the taboo of death. If the warrior did not celebrate the feast, we are told, " a thousand misfortunes would befall him: his seed would not grow, his animals would not prosper, his family and he himself would die: *the irritated soul of the dead would give him no peace until the traditional ceremonies had been accomplished*."[1] In order to protect himself against the dangerous spirit, he paints his body black, and for the same reason he abstains from big game and birds; the spirit may hide in the meat and get entrance into his body through it. It is a common Indian idea that the souls of the dead preferably incarnate themselves in certain big animals and birds that normally are most used for food. On the other hand, he may eat fish and small birds to which these Indians do not extend their theory of metempsychosis. Lastly, he abstains from sexual intercourse, because at this important act the malignant spirit may again operate against the victor himself and badly affect the coming offspring.

---

[1] Rivet, *Les Indiens Jibaros* (*L'Anthropologie*, tome xix.), pp. 244-247. Vacas Galindo, *Nankijukima*, pp. 116-119, 160. Gonzalez Suarez, *Historia general de la republica del Ecuador*, vi. 215. Cp. also Figueroa, *Relación de las misiones de la Compañia de Jesús en el pais de los Maynas*, pp. 254-260.

[2] Rivet, *op. cit.*, p. 248.

The feast proper essentially consists in the actual conjuration of the dangerous spirit. Of great interest is the washing of the trophy in a decoction of tobacco, in the fermented beer, and lastly in pure water. This washing marks the beginning of the conjuration, its aim being to " disinfect " the head and to remove its baneful qualities. Tobacco is by most Indians regarded as a strong antidote against evil spirits, and originally the plant was used in South America for purely religious and magical purposes. The same may be said of the fermented beer which, as I have pointed out before, is everywhere considered as sacred, and plays an extremely important part in all religious ceremonies. The washing with pure water, the last procedure, is likewise a rite of purification. When we hear that after the trophy has been successively dipped in these three liquids, the latter are poured into the owner of the *tsantsa*, this is again a magical ceremony. The liquids have paralyzed the evil effects of the spirit and conjured it; hence when the victor is brought into intimate contact with the same liquids by drinking them, he is himself, according to the Indian way of reasoning, made immune from the evil influences of his slain enemy. Therefore the fast is " closed " with this procedure. There is no longer any danger for him in eating any kind of food. The conjuration of the spirit is completed with the dance around it in which all the guests take an active part. This dance we have no difficulty in understanding since we know, once for all, that it is, according to the general Indian belief, one of the most efficacious means of conjuring and exorcising supernatural beings, and that this most probably has been the origin of all Indian dances.

---

[1] Rivet, *op. cit.*, p. 244. Vacas Galindo, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

The " initiation " of the head-trophy is now completed. The inimical human spirit inhabiting it is not annihilated; its magical power is the same as before, but it is entirely subdued and enslaved by the series of conjurations performed. Thus the feast of the *tsantsas*, far from being, as Dr. Rivet assumes, a friendly act of expiation and reparation for the spirit of the dead, has just the opposite character. The attitude towards the spirit which appears in the ritual described is throughout professedly hostile. The result arrived at by all these ceremonies is that the *tsantsa* is now an equally propitious thing for its owner, as in the beginning it was dangerous and likely to bring misfortune. In fact, the trophy is afterwards turned into a real fetish, which brings its owner, his parents and friends abundance of property, fertility for the fields, prosperity for the family and the tribe, victory over enemies, and immortality. It even serves as a kind of oracle.[1] All this is due to the magical power with which the head is charged. When the harvest is not abundant enough, when the domestic animals are not prolific, the women make a feast called " supplication," during which they dance round the trophy, which is held by an old man.[2] This is done to enhance or refresh its magical power. This magical power is like the power of an electric battery: it may diminish or entirely vanish in the course of time. Hence if the ceremony does not give the desired result the women shave off the scalp of the trophy or throw away the whole thing. Usually the *tsantsa* is carefully kept in a pot from where it is taken out and used as an ornament on festive occasions, especially when an anniversary of a victory is celebrated. But since in the course of years it gradually loses its supernatural power, it also loses its religious importance and is at last thrown away in the river as a useless thing.[1]

---

[1] Rivet, *op. cit.*, p. 248. Vacas Galindo, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

[2] Rivet, *op. cit.*, p. 249.

Although, according to the Indian belief, the whole head is charged with the power of the spirit contained in it, this power is especially concentrated in the hairy part of the trophy, the scalp. The Jibaros are also in the habit of making cinctures of the hair of the *tsantsas*, which, according to Dr. Rivet, play a similar rôle to these. They are worn as ornaments during feasts and on war expeditions.[2]

The head-trophies of the Mundrucús were, of course, connected with similar magical ideas, although their preparation was somewhat different from that customary among the Jibaros. The head of the slain enemy was severed from the trunk with a knife made of broad bamboo; the brain, the muscles, the eyes, and the tongue were taken out; the skull was repeatedly soaked in a vegetable oil mixed with *urucú*, and exposed for several days over the smoke of the fire or in the sun until it was quite dry. An artificial brain of dyed cotton was subsequently put in, the orbits of the eyes were filled with rosin, and the whole head was covered with a hood of feathers. Adorned in this manner the horrid trophy became the permanent companion of the victor, who carried it by a string at his cincture wherever he went.[3] In this case the vegetable oil and the *urucú*, as well as the smoking over the fire, served the same purpose as the tobacco decoction and the fermented beer among the Jibaros—to neutralize the evil influences emanating from the trophy in its " natural " condition. Similarly the dyed cotton, the rosin, and the feather hood were magical things, intended for keeping the spirit constantly at bay, or perhaps for eking out the power of the trophy. That the head-trophy was regarded as a propitious thing as among the Jibaros, appears from its being always carried about by its owner.

---

[1] Rivet, *op. cit.*, p. 249. Since the above was written I have myself visited the Jibaros and, amongst other things, thoroughly studied the ceremonies practised at their *tsantsa* feasts. These ceremonies among the tribes of the Upano-Santiago, Morona, and Pastaza differ essentially from those described by Dr. Rivet from the region of Gualaquiza. It is also evident that the statements of the writers Rivet follows are not only wholly incomplete, but also incorrect in many details. But the explanation I have given of the custom itself is correct. There are two main ideas underlying all ceremonies of the feast: first, that the spirit of the slain enemy is thirsting for revenge, and has to be subdued and enslaved; second, that, if the victor has succeeded in effecting this, the trophy is thereafter changed into a fetish or lucky object, which brings all sorts of benefits upon the victor himself, his family, and his whole tribe. See my book, *Blood Revenge, War, and Victory Feasts among the Jibaro Indians of Eastern Ecuador*, *passim*, and especially " Concluding Remarks," p. 87 *sqq*.

[2] Rivet, *loc. cit.*, Pigorini, " Di una collezione etnologica della Republica dell' Equatore," in *Bolletino della Societá geografica Italiana*, Roma, vol. xv., 1878, p. 102.

[3] v. Spix and v. Martius, *op. cit.*, iii. 1314. v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 392. Bates, *The Naturalist on the River Amazon*, p. 244.

The magical significance of the head-trophies is, moreover, shown by the practices of the Araucanians in Chile. Here also the head of the slain enemy was not only looked upon as an extremely lucky object, but used as a real oracle. According to the belief of the Araucanians, the victory would unfailingly fall to the party which was the first to kill an enemy in the battle. The head was at once cut off and fixed on a lance. At the sight of the head of their kinsman on the top of the lance the rest of the enemies gave up the battle, considering the incident to be a very unfortunate omen.[1] This view is fully in accordance with the marvellous supernatural effects generally ascribed to such head-trophies. The party which has succeeded in taking the first trophy has acquired such a predominance over its enemy that any fighting against it is considered useless.

When a captive was slain certain magical ceremonies were performed with the head, as well as with the arm-bones and thigh-bones, of which flutes were made. The warriors were ranged in two parallel rows facing each other, and the head of the captive was thrown along the path thus opened. If at the end of the road it stopped with the face turned towards the enemies, this was considered a good omen; if, on the contrary, it stopped with the face turned towards its own people, this was a bad presage. The head was afterwards solemnly erected on a pole with the face towards the enemy and conjured by singing, dancing, and making music with flutes made of the captive's bones.[2]

The Araucanians likewise knew the custom practised by most Indian head- and scalp-hunters, to drink from the skulls of their slain enemies, a privilege, however, confined to the chiefs and other specially honoured persons.[3] The idea underlying this custom is that by drinking from the skull or scalp one may incorporate with oneself the spiritual energy with which it is saturated.

The Chaco Indians, as I have mentioned before, are chiefly scalp-hunters, although the heads of slain enemies are also kept. The ceremonies performed with the scalps are not so elaborate as among the Jibaros and the Araucanians, but they reveal the same magical ideas. Shortly before I arrived among the Pilcomayo Indians in 1911, the Ashluslays had succeeded in killing nineteen Bolivian soldiers who were marching down to one of the Bolivian forts on the river. The heads of the young men had been cut off and taken home by the Indians. Later on it was reported that their scalps or skulls, fixed on long poles, decorated the entrance to the main Indian village, being used at the feasts as drinking-cups in order to inspire the drinkers with courage. The use of the scalp as a drinking-cup, which always depends on magical ideas, is also met with among the Matacos. On this point the Italian explorer Pelleschi makes the following statement with regard to the Argentine Mataco-Vejós: " Whosoever kills an enemy wears as a trophy, if he has time to secure it, the scalp with the hair, the ears, and possibly a fold of skin from the back of the neck. He forms it to the shape of a cup by means of a bulrush or a flexible twig, which he binds and stitches all round the edge; then, while still bloody, he fills it with liquor, and holding it by the hair, passes it round to his companions, who empty it as they drink in honour of the victor and in scorn of the vanquished. Another way is to hold the scalp by the edge and pour out the liquor in drops over the hair and jaws."[1]

---

[1] Rosales, *op. cit.*, i. 121.

[2] Rosales, *op. cit.*, i. 125.

[3] Rosales, *op. cit.*, i. 123. Cp. also, on the same Araucanian customs, Medina, *Los Aborigenes de Chile*, pp. 145-149.

The Chaco Indians also practise the custom of dancing round the conquered scalps of their enemies. The Matacos, for instance, suspend the scalp on a long ornamented pole and perform a dance around it, accompanying the dance with chanting and the beating of drums. There is hardly any doubt that these scalp-dances have the same object as the trophy-dances among the Jibaros, namely, to conjure the spirit contained in the scalp and to render it harmless. It is a common Indian idea that the revengeful spirit of a slain enemy, and also of a slain animal, may be a great source of danger, especially for the slayer himself. This view clearly appears, for instance, in the elaborate ceremonies with which the Tupis used to kill captives taken in war, ceremonies essentially inspired by fear of their ghosts. The Chaco Indians are familiar with the same ideas. But sometimes custom requires that the scalp-dance should be performed only by *women*, and this seems, indeed, to be the rule in the Gran Chaco. Thus Dr. Nordenskiöld relates that when he had bought a scalp of the Matacos, they demanded that before they parted with their

[1] Pelleschi, *Eight Months on the Gran Chaco*, p. 80.

trophy, the old women should sing and dance with it.[1] This was probably due to special ideas. The most important and benign effects ascribed to head-trophies is that they promote the fertility of the fields and render the domestic animals prolific. Now we know that, according to the belief of uncivilized peoples, woman is, as it were, the symbol of all fertility, not only in the human but also in the animal world and in nature. This is most probably also the reason why in primitive communities agriculture is generally a business incumbent on the women. We may therefore conjecture that when women perform the scalp-dance, this is to promote fertility by means of the lucky object. So it is, for instance, among the Jibaros, where the dance of "supplication" round the trophy is professedly resorted to in order to make the harvest abundant and the animals prolific.[2]

The custom of skinning slain enemies is, in one way, closely related to scalping and making head-trophies. As pointed out in the beginning of this chapter, the human soul or spirit, according to primitive belief, is concentrated not only in the hair and the nails, but also in the skin of the body, especially in the hairy part of it. But the use of such trophies is comparatively limited in South America. According to Dr. Friederici, the ceremonial skinning of slain enemies has had three principal centres in America, *viz.*, Mexico, the valley of the Cauca in northern Colombia, and the Inca empire.[3] Among the Aztecs, as we know, the skinning of captured enemies, especially of captured chiefs, formed an important part of the religious ceremonies. But whereas, among polytheistic peoples like the ancient Mexicans, skinning receives a peculiar character, being a religious as well as a magical custom, it is at a lower stage of culture, as among the South American Indians, first of all magical. In South America the valley of the Cauca was not only, as we have seen, formerly an important centre of human head-trophies; for skin-trophies were also commonly prepared. These warlike peoples, who were cannibals, were in the habit of making trophies of the stuffed figures of their killed enemies. They opened their bodies with knives, and stripped off the skins, and, after having fed on the flesh, filled the skins with ashes, making also artificial faces of wax on their heads. These horrible stuffed figures were kept in special temple-like houses, arranged in a seated posture along the walls and holding lances or clubs in their hands, which made them look " as if they had been living men." Such, as well as other kinds of human trophies, Cieza de León met with when he passed through the Cauca valley.[1] Moreover, the same custom was found to prevail further on, within the dominions of the Inca empire. Just as we know that—in spite of the emphatic denials of Garcilasso de la Vega—human sacrifices were customary among the Incas, so we also know that skinning and other barbaric war practices were in vogue. From the chiefs of vanquished enemies sometimes the whole skin was stripped off, subsequently filled with ashes and hung up in the temples, or made into big kettle-drums. The skin was prepared and blown out in such a way that the belly formed the drum-skin, the hands hanging over it like drumsticks, and the head crowning the whole thing. A flute was put in the mouth, and the whole apparatus was so arranged that when there was a sufficiently strong wind the hands drummed on the belly and the flute in the mouth made music.[2]

---

[1] Nordenskiöld, *Indianerleben*, p. 18.

[2] See Karsten, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

[3] Friederici, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

Now, it is perfectly clear that such customs cannot have been merely a gratuitous play with the bodies of vanquished enemies, but that they were founded on special magical ideas, above all on the idea that the skin of the slain enemy contains his soul and is charged with its energy. The Indian drums are always purely religious and magical instruments, means of conjuration, and their efficacy essentially depends on the supernatural power ascribed to the material of which they are made. This is a principle which, as we shall see, appears in most religious instruments of the Indians. But apart from this, there is another idea attached to drums made of human skin. The soul of a man whose skin is used in this way is utterly enslaved and subdued, indeed, doomed to eternal torments; for the conjuration, although carried out through the spirit enclosed in the drum, at the same time keeps it under constant coercion. Exactly the same principle underlies the practice of making flutes of the bones of slain enemies. To make magical instruments of vital parts of an enemy's body is to give him up to the most cruel lot, to annihilate him as an independent being, to render his future rebirth impossible. This treatment, therefore, again forms an illustrative contrast to the careful preservation and interment of the remains of dead relatives and friends, with which I dealt in the previous chapter.

---

[1] Cieza de León, *op. cit.*, c. 28.

[2] See Garcilasso de la Vega, *op. cit.*, bk. ix., c. 8. Cieza de León, *op. cit.* c. 49, 84. Rivero y v. Tschudi, *Antigüedades Peruanas*, pp. 41-43. Friederici, *p. cit.*, p. 93.

The practice of stuffing the skin with ashes is also connected with a special magical idea. Ashes are, according to a general Indian belief, extremely efficacious means of purification and antidotes against evil spirits; for, filling the skin, they help to exorcise the spirit contained in it. The supernatural virtue ascribed to ashes, which also appears in the frequent use of them at tattooing, probably depends on their connection with the fire, which is the strongest means of purification.

The principles pointed out above also help us to understand certain customs of the Araucanians. These natives not only prepared trophies of the skulls of their enemies, but also used to strip off the skin from their heads, and to make frontals of it which were called *mañague*.[1] Again, a man who was initiated into the profession of sorcery, among other ceremonies which were performed for him, had to put on a mask made of the skin of a human face.[2] The idea was the same as with all similar head ornaments. The frontal and the mask were magical things because of the spiritual energy inherent in them, and were therefore efficacious as means of conjuration or as protections for the head.

The frequent use of skins of animals as personal ornaments or as coverings for the body must, at least partly, be explained in the same way. Animals have a soul or spirit just as men have, and this spirit is especially collected at the hairy surface of their body; in fact, the fell of an animal has the same magical significance as the human hair. Moreover, the spirit which animates the animal is mostly, if not always, according to the Indian idea, a reincarnated human soul, for, as we shall see later on, the belief in metempsychosis is general among the South American Indians. This question, however, is at present of little importance, since the incarnated spirit is always supposed to assume the character of the animal to which it is transferred.

The use of animals' skins for magical purposes is first of all connected with the idea that to possess the skin of an animal is to possess the power wholly to control it, since the spirit of the animal is seated in its skin. Thus, we are told of an Indian medicine-man in north-west Brazil, that he wore the skin of an anaconda in the belief that by using the skin he could control the spirit of the huge reptile.[1] The medicine-men in the north-western Amazonas are also believed to be able to transform themselves into tigers, not only after death, but even during their lifetime. Hence every medicine-man possesses a jaguar's skin that he is said to use when he turns into a tiger. By the possession of a skin he has the power of resuscitating the tiger, he himself being the spirit of the tiger.[2] Numerous superstitious practices with animals' skins are based upon the same idea.

---

[1] Rosales, *op. cit.*, i. 126.

[2] Medina, *op. cit.*, p. 247.

Moreover, when we hear that the Indians dress themselves in the fells of tigers and other ferocious animals for a battle, this is certainly not due merely to the natural protection these skins afford for the body, but evidently also to the idea that they will convey their inherent power to the warrior and give him strength. Such armour of tigers' skins has been used by the warlike Tobas in Chaco.[3] According to Father Lozano, the ancient Tobas used to paint themselves " like tigers and other formidable animals, the figures of which they imagined would make them terrible to their enemies."[4] Here the painted representation of the tiger's skin was a substitute for the real thing, but the magical idea was the same. These Indians also, when they prepared themselves for war, put on the tails of foxes, and for head-gear used peculiar caps of skin adorned with many-coloured plumes.[5]

Again, the Araucanians used to make head-gears of the skins of birds, foxes, and other animals, leaving the head connected with the skin, and arranging it in such a way that the beak of the bird or the teeth of the animal fell on the forehead as ornaments. The same head ornament also was made of the skin taken from a slain enemy's head.[6] The magical character of these ornaments is obvious: their object was to protect the head and the face against evil influences, or, perhaps, to convey to the wearer the spiritual power of the animal or human enemy whose skin was worn. The same idea clearly appears in the custom of some other natives in Chile, who armed themselves with large jackets made of the crude skins of wolves and other wild animals, and covered the head with helmets of the same material. Others wore caps and head-gears of the skins of tigers and lions, adorned with many plumes in different colours.[1]

---

[1] Whiffen, *The North-West Amazons*, p. 184.

[2] Both the jaguar and the anaconda are " magical beasts," and regarded as evil spirits (Whiffen, *op. cit.*, p. 182).

[3] Campos, *op. cit.*, p. 250.

[4] Lozano, *Historia de la Compañia de Jesús en la Provincia de Paraguay*, p. 99. In his *Descripción chorographica de las Provincias del Gran Chaco*, p. 102, the same author says that they painted their bodies, " imitating the spots of the tiger."

[5] Lozano, *Descripción chorographica de las Provincias del Gran Chaco*, p. 102.

[6] Rosales, *op. cit.*, i. 126.

It is needless to illustrate such customs with more examples. Skins of animals are largely used by the South American Indians as coverings for the body, and I, of course, do not assert that they are *always* worn for superstitious reasons. Yet the superstitious ideas connected with the use of skin dresses and skin ornaments must be specially pointed out, because they have mostly been overlooked by writers on primitive customs. A special application of these magical principles is found in the totem-dances of some North American tribes, in which, as we know, skins of animals are often ceremonially used.

[1] Medina, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

CHAPTER III

FEATHER ORNAMENTS

THE feather ornaments are of such importance among the South American Indians, as indeed among most other uncivilized peoples, that they may be dealt with in a special chapter. Yet my treatment of this subject cannot, of course, be exhaustive. An elaborate exposition of the Indian feather ornaments would fill a whole volume. My chief aim is not to give a full description and classification of these ornaments, but to show the superstitious ideas with which they are connected, and which, as far as I know, have never been pointed out before. For this purpose I shall in the following pages only adduce such facts as bear direct relation to my main thesis.

A common view with regard to the primitive feather ornaments is that they have originally been trophies of chase. As the savage is proud of the spoils he has taken from his enemies in war and ostentatiously shows them off, so he wears the skins and feathers of the animals and birds killed in hunting as visible proofs of his skill and courage. Herbert Spencer was, I believe, the first to set forth this theory,[1] which has met with almost general acceptance among modern writers on primitive art. Thus, Professor Y. Hirn points out that, with special reference to the tribes of the Rio Xingú, von den Steinen has " succeeded in amply corroborating the theory of Spencer, that the simplest ornaments have been trophies of war and chase. In the feather crowns of the chiefs, for example, we may thus see only a late development of proudly arranged spoils of the chase, by which a successful hunter proclaims his achievements." " It is needless to point out," Professor Hirn adds, " that in time of war such decorations must be of eminent advantage, by inspiring the wearer with pride at the same time as they strike his enemies with terror."[2]

However plausible this theory may seem when we look upon the matter from a civilized point of view, it does not bear out the true ideas underlying the Indian feather ornaments. Nor do I believe that it is " amply corroborated " by the actual ideas of the Xingú tribes. To take this view of the subject is to overlook entirely the primitive magical character such ornaments undoubtedly have in many cases, and which, as we shall presently find, gives them their special importance to their savage wearer. As to Spencer, he was on the whole most unfortunate in his theories on primitive customs. Having never himself been in personal contact with uncivilized peoples, he judged of their customs and ideas too theoretically, and his sociological method, as a matter of fact, was rather deductive than inductive. The ethnological evidences which he adduces in support of his views are, therefore, more often apparent than real. Again, Professor von den Steinen's view of the Indian feather ornaments is closely connected with his general theory of their dances, which, in his opinion, have originally been nothing but hunting-feasts, joyous amusements by which returning hunters have celebrated their good luck.[1] As we have already seen, the Indian dances are founded on vastly different principles, and even the so-called hunting-feasts and mask-dances are, as will be shown later on, performances of profound religious and magical significance.

---

[1] Spencer, *Principles of Sociology*, ii. 75, 174, etc.

[2] Hirn, *Origins of Art*, pp. 221-222. v. d. Steinen *Unter den Naturvölkern Central-Brasiliens*, p. 179.

Nor can we arrive at the original sources of primitive art by any general psychological considerations, of whatever kind they may be. The mode of thought involved therein is at best that of civilized man; savages have a psychology of their own. A deeper penetration into the particular psychology of savage man is, therefore, necessary for anybody who wants to find out the primary ideas underlying the artistic productions of the Indians. It is, of course, quite " natural " that even a savage hunter and warrior is proud of the spoils he has taken in the chase or in war, and likes to show them off both to his tribesmen and to his enemies. I do not assert that this vanity and the sense of pride is wholly absent as a motive for wearing feather ornaments, but I maintain that it does not by any means fully explain the enormous importance they have among most lower peoples.

Besides, by saying that feather ornaments are regarded as " trophies of the chase," we have not yet given any explanation of their real nature, for a " trophy " to the savage is something very different from what it is to civilized people. It is to the former in many cases an object charged with magical power, as we have seen in dealing with the head-trophies, scalps, and other similar symbols of victory made from the bodies of slain enemies.

---

[1] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, pp. 298, 320, etc.

As a matter of fact, feathers and plumes, according to the Indian idea, not only afford an efficacious protection against evil spirits, but are also powerful means whereby men can conjure and exorcise them. For this reason feather ornaments are, above all, used on occasions when the Indians enter into relation with the spiritual world, and these occasions, as we have seen, are numerous enough. Again, the magical power ascribed to feathers depends on a very natural consideration: *the feathers are the hair of the bird, and they have the same magical power as the human hair.* As I have pointed out before, the Indian belief endows even animals with a spirit or soul, which seems to be essentially of the same kind as the human spirit. This theory is applied to birds also, and it is probably something more than a pure accident that, for instance, ostriches, parrots, and herons, the plumes of which are most commonly used as ornaments, are also most commonly regarded as " magical " birds. But whatever the spirit may be which animates the bird, the efficacy ascribed to the feathers is a fact beyond dispute. Since the spirit of the bird is collected in its feathers, as the human spirit is concentrated in the hair of the head, it follows that feathers and plumes are particularly charged with supernatural power. In this belief, it seems to me, we must seek the real explanation of the enormously important rôle feather ornaments play in all religious ceremonies, in which they serve much the same purpose as rattles, drums, flutes, and other purely magical instruments.

It is a well-known fact that the use of feathers is generally confined to the men, women very seldom adorning themselves with such ornaments. This is partly due to the fact that the Indian ornaments mostly are strictly personal property, and that originally each individual is supposed to wear only the plumes, teeth, etc., of such animals as he has killed himself. As women do not hunt, neither do they, as a rule, decorate themselves with spoils of chase. But there are some deeper reasons for this limitation also. Feathers of birds and teeth of animals, as I have pointed out, are by no means only " trophies," worn out of mere vanity. Their value, in the first place, depends on the fact that they are supposed to convey to the wearer the spiritual strength and qualities of the animals to which they have belonged. The spoils of chase with which the hunter decorates himself convey to him strictly *virile* qualities which are not fit for a woman to appropriate. This is most conspicuous in cases where the animal killed is supposed to be the incarnation of a *man's* spirit. Thus, for instance, in Chaco, ostrich plumes are the most common feather ornaments. But it seems to be the idea of the Chaco Indians that only men reincarnate themselves in ostriches after death, and that, therefore, the ostrich is particularly a masculine bird. At any rate, this is the idea of the Tobas, among whom the ostrich is, as it were, the special symbol of the men, whereas women are believed to reincarnate themselves in various other animals after death. Hence, among these Indians only men, and not the women, eat the flesh of the ostrich,[1] and from this it follows that they do not decorate themselves with the feathers of that bird.

Lastly, as already pointed out, feathers are essentially means of conjuring and exorcising evil spirits and used as charms even in many cases where to a superficial observer they seem to be mere "ornaments." Now, women on the whole play a subordinate rôle in all religious and magical ceremonies. As they do not use rattles and drums, so they do not, as a rule, wear plumes of birds. There are exceptions to this rule, and among some tribes in Chaco, for example, women take an active part in the dances and feasts with which girls are initiated at puberty. In such cases we also may find an exception to the prohibition for women to wear feather ornaments, but these exceptions only afford a confirmation of the general thesis, here set forth, that feathers and plumes are worn first of all because of the magical virtue ascribed to them.

Before I proceed to give instances illustrating the use of feather ornaments on different occasions, I shall point out some kindred ideas which give us a further insight into the magical system of thought with which we are dealing. As the skin and hair of men and animals and the feathers of birds are supposed to be the seat of a special power, so there is the same belief with regard to some parallel phenomena in the plant world. I have already mentioned that, according to Indian belief, the vital power of the tree is collected in its bark and rind, which answer to the skin of a man or an animal. But exactly in the same way the leaves and flowers of the tree correspond to the human hair and the feathers of the birds. That this is so, is testified by some Indian languages. Thus, in the Choroti language, *uóle* means " hair," especially the human hair, but also the hair or wool of an animal, as well as the down of a bird and the leaf of a tree. *Sóntah uóle*, for instance, means the " wool of a sheep," *ahuénta uóle*, the " down of a hen," etc. In the same way, *lah'uole* means the leaf and flower, or, literally, the " hair " of a tree. The same probably holds true of several other Indian languages. Thus Professor von den Steinen says that in the Bakaïri language, " and probably also in other languages," there is the same word for " hair " and " feather," and for " wood."[1] The idea that the leafage of a tree is equivalent to the human hair, in my opinion, explains the widespread use of leaves for medical and magical purposes among the South American Indians. The leaf, applied to a wound, is supposed to have a remarkable curative power, evidently because the spirit of the tree is believed to be particularly concentrated in its leaves, just as the spiritual power of a man is concentrated in his hair. In a still higher degree this holds true of flowers. Some peculiar Indian superstitions with regard to flowers, no doubt, are due to this idea. Thus, for instance, we are told that the Baure Indians in Bolivia shun their fields during the time when the maize is blooming for fear lest their souls should be taken by the spirits.[2] It is a common Indian belief that the growth and bloom of useful plants is caused by certain spirits inhabiting them. These more or less dangerous spirits are, as it were, released to actual activity when the plants reach their climax of development at the time of flowering, and are therefore feared. The fact that flowers are sometimes used as charms instead of feathers and worn as " ornaments " is probably the consequence of the same belief.

---

[1] This is, at any rate, the case on a special occasion—namely, at the great feast which is held in honour of a chief's daughter at the attainment of puberty. At this feast the men eat only the meat of ostrich, whereas the women eat only the meat of armadillo.

Examining the different occasions on which feather ornaments are worn, we first of all notice the important rôle they play at all feasts and dances. Now it is almost a hopeless task to try to exhaust the available facts in this respect, and hardly necessary either, since it is commonly known that the Indians especially like to adorn themselves with feathers and plumes for their dances. Yet, some illustrative instances may be adduced, with which I propose to show in particular, that in such cases the feathers are not, or have not originally been, properly ornaments, but have a purely magical significance.

[1] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

[2] Nordenskiöld, *Indianer och hvita*, p. 145.

A difficulty which besets any systematic exposition of the Indian dances is the inaccuracy of the statements. Dances and feasts are held for many different purposes, but most writers fail to give the details necessary for determining their true nature. Yet I venture to repeat in this connection the assertion made in a previous chapter, that all Indian dances most probably have been originally purely religious or magical performances, and that all ornaments used on such occasions have been nothing but charms and amulets. This may be said, for instance, of the feather ornaments worn at the drinking-feasts among many Indian tribes. In most, if not in all cases, the Indian drinking-feasts, and especially the dances accompanying them, have a religious significance, since the intoxicating liquor is to the Indian mind a " divine " drink, and the drinking itself is regarded as a protection against evil spirits.[1] From this point of view we have to explain, for instance, the dance with which, according to Father Lozano, some Indians in Paraguay, belonging to the Guaycurú-group, used to celebrate their great drinking-feasts. " The men," says the Father, " paint their bodies in imitation of the spots of the tiger; they girdle themselves with plumages and put on the tail of a fox; on the head they have a sort of cap adorned with plumes in various colours, and on the hands they wear plumes by way of bracelets. The women again paint their face black and red, and attach a red plumage to the head."[2] That this dance was essentially a conjuration, appears plainly even from the magical staff adorned with pig's and deer's hoofs at the top, with which the leader marked the time, as well as from other details given by the writer.[3]

Among the Chanés of the Rio Itiyuro in North Argentine I found an old festive dress made solely of ostrich feathers, which, according to the information of the Indians, was formerly used by the Chanés and Chiriguanos in the dances at their great drinking-feasts. Masks and different kinds of rattles were also used on these occasions. The object of the feathers, as of the rest of the ornaments, was to conjure the spirits of the dead, called *aña*, which were supposed to come in great numbers to the annual *chicha*-feasts, and were feared because they were believed to bring evil. Such religious and magical ideas are certainly not limited to the drinking-feasts of the Chanés and Chiriguanos, but are beyond doubt to be found among most South American Indians, although they have hitherto been little known.[1] The feathers and plumes put on for these dances not only act as deterrents to the spirits, because of the weird appearance they give the persons wearing them, but actually aid to conjure and exorcise them by virtue of their inherent magical power.

---

[1] Cp. *supra*, p. 15. See also my treatise, *La religion de los Indios Mataco-Nocténes* (*Anales del Museo Nacional*, 1913), p. 203, and the treatise, *Indian Dances in the Gran Chaco* (*Ofversigt af Finska Vetenskaps-Societetens Förhandlingar*, Bd. LVII., Afd. B, No. 6), p. 21 *sqq.*

[2] Lozano, *Descripción chorographica de las Provincias del Gran Chaco*, p. 102.

[3] Lozano, *loc. cit.*

The same, no doubt, holds true of the feather ornaments worn at other festive dances, even if their real nature is not indicated. Thus, the Chorotis and the Ashluslays annually hold great dances at the algaroba-season in December and January, at which the men decorate themselves, among other things, with grand ostrich plumes stuck in the red knitted hoods which they wear on their heads. These dances are partly held to celebrate the gathering-in of the crops, and also have reference to the sexual life. I have suggested before that the facial paintings applied for these dances were not originally real ornaments or means of sexual attraction, but magical charms, since courtship and marriage is among the Indians to a great extent a religious matter.[2] The same thing probably, on the principles I have laid down, holds true of the ostrich plumes.

Professor von den Steinen, speaking of the Xingú tribes, says that among them "all feather ornaments . . . belong to festive occasions, including the festive reception. It is with the feathers as it is with the painting of the body."[3] With this we may fully agree; but whereas it is difficult to see the connection between the feather ornaments and the body-painting on the assumption of von den Steinen that the function of the latter is merely to be a protection against insects and against the changes of the weather, it is otherwise when we regard both simply as magical charms. Moreover, just as the painting is sometimes far from beautiful from a civilized and probably also from an Indian point of view, so the same may in some cases be said of the feather ornaments. Thus, for example, Herr von Koenigswald, in an article on the Coroado Indians, has published an interesting photograph of a Coroado Indian wearing a festive dress of many-coloured feathers which cover the whole body from head to foot. The feathers are arranged at random and without any artistic effect, the intention, perhaps, being simply to cover carefully every spot of the body with the protecting charms.[1] It is difficult to believe that the Indians themselves found this fantastic feather dress " beautiful," although it was worn on a festive occasion. If questioned on this point, they probably would have answered simply that it was " good," since it well served the practical purpose of protecting the individual against the evil spirits with whom he entered into relation during the dance. Yet I ought to add that in such cases feather ornaments may also be regarded as trophies, the wearer being proud of showing off to his fellow-tribesmen how many birds he has been able to shoot. At Canelos in eastern Ecuador I frequently found rich spoils of plumes and stuffed birds worn at feasts by Indian hunters for this reason. But at the same time magical properties were ascribed to these feather ornaments.

---

[1] Among the Chaco tribes, the proper drinking season falls in the time when the algaroba fruit grows ripe in December and January. This Indian carnival is, for instance, among the Matacos and the Tobas celebrated with a special dance, the aim of which, as the Indians informed me, is to conjure or drive away the spirits of the dead, who are supposed to arrive in great numbers at this time in order to take part in the feasts. Such ideas are probably connected with the *chicha*-feasts among most South American Indians. See Karsten, *Beiträge zur Sittengeschichte des südamerikanischen Indianer* (*Acta Academiæ Aboënsis*. Humaniora, i: 3), p. 28 *sqq*.

[2] See *supra*, pp. 19 ,39, note 2.

[3] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 329.

Mostly, however, the Indian feather ornaments are really beautiful, as, for instance, the tremendous diadems of blue and yellow macaw feathers with which the Xingú tribes adorned their foreheads for feasts and dances,[2] or the crowns of many-coloured feathers which, together with rattles and other amulets, formed the chief festive ornaments of some Indian tribes on the Amazon.[3] To give a complete account of the Indian feather crowns and diadems, which are especially used at the religious feasts and dances, is hardly possible. Dr. Koch-Grünberg gives us a good description, illustrated with excellent photographs, of the various feather ornaments used by the tribes of the Rio Negro and its tributaries. Thus on the Rio Tiquié, the dancing-dress consisted, among other things, of a beautiful feather ornament called *kangatára*, a broad feather bindlet of the bright-red and yellow feathers of the macaw, bordered with the white down of the urubutinga vulture. From the back of the head a big plume of fine white heron's feathers arose, into which a long tail feather of a red macaw was horizontally stuck. Round the left arm each dancer wore a large tuft of monkey's hair and many-coloured feathers, fastened to a black ornamented gourd.[1] Most of the other ornaments and objects used at the feasts and dances, such as the dancing-hats and shields, the masks and the rattle-gourds, were decorated with many-coloured feathers or down,[2] showing the great importance the Indians attach to such things.

---

[1] v. Koenigswald, "Die Coroados im südlichen Brasilien," in *Globus*, Bd. XCIV., 1908, p. 27.

[2] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 477.

[3] Murr *Reisen einiger Missionarien der Gesellschaft Jesu in Amerika*, p. 281.

Again, the Juris of the Rio Japurá adorned themselves for their dances both with facial paintings and all sorts of rattles, as also with feathers, which either were tied round the temples like a crown or hung on the back like a pig-tail. The chief dancer had a head-gear consisting of a hollow cylinder of ambariva wood, adorned with bunches of feathers.[3] The Mundrucús are not only famous for their head-trophies, but also for their feather ornaments which are made with great artistic skill. Von Spix and von Martius mention that at their feasts they used sceptres, hats, caps, and all sorts of garlands made of feathers, as well as feather mantles which they threw over their shoulders, and aprons of ostrich feathers which they tied round the waist.[4] Some of these feather ornaments, says von Martius, belong to the most refined productions of the industrial art of the Indians. The feathers were carefully assorted, tied or fastened together with black wax and kept in special baskets, and various birds were reared for the particular purpose of affording the material for these ornaments.[5]

Again, the Tapujas used to fix feathers of different colours with gum or wax on the forehead and on the body, this ornamental arrangement being called *aguana*. They also made mantles of feathers for the arms and for the neck. The largest plumes, taken from the tail of the ostrich and the macaw, they put round the waist to cover the genital parts, these coverings reaching down to the knees.[6]

In none of these cases is given any detail as to the character of the feast for which such ornaments are put on. Thus, one who starts from the certainly erroneous assumption that dances are to savages the same as they are to civilized peoples, mere amusements and expressions of joy, would naturally feel inclined to believe that the feather ornaments mentioned serve no other purpose than to embellish the appearance and perhaps to attract the opposite sex. Yet, it seems to me, some of them—for instance, the feathered hats and caps which cover almost the whole head and face, the feather mantles, etc.—offer a much greater psychological problem if looked upon merely from an æsthetic point of view, than if regarded simply as practical measures to cover delicate parts of the body, and to ward off evil supernatural influences.

---

[1] Koch-Grünberg, *Zwei Jahre unter den Indianern*, i. 285-287.

[2] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 344, 345; ii. 156, 168.

[3] v. Spix and v. Martius, *Reise in Brasilien*, iii. 1227.

[4] v. Spix and v. Martius, *op. cit.*, iii. 1312.

[5] v. Martius, *Beiträge zur Ethnographie Amerika's*, i. 389.

[6] Baro, *Relations véritables et curieuses du Brésil*, p. 304.

Among the Araonas of the Amazonian lowland feasts are celebrated with dancing, as are also the seasons of planting. On these occasions the Indians garland themselves with feathers and play ball, when they belt themselves with the bark of a tree.[1] In this case the garlanding with the feathers has, no doubt, the same magical significance as the ball-playing and the belting with the bark. Planting as well as harvesting are, among many Indian tribes, regarded as important and critical occasions, and therefore celebrated with special religious and magical ceremonies.

Of the elaborate marriage ceremonies which Father Gumilla describes from among the Guayquiries of the Orinoco, the adorning with feathers is the most interesting. All participants in the feast anointed themselves previously with an oil, and adorned themselves with feathers. Especially the bride herself was carefully ornamented with plumes by a number of old women, who continued the operation the whole afternoon and night preceding the wedding, so that she was not even allowed to sleep. The wedding was celebrated first of all with a dance, all participants in this being adorned with crowns of flowers and wearing feather dresses. The bridegroom, when he took part in this dance, was likewise adorned with a special ornament of plumes. Nay, even the flutes with which music was made were richly ornamented with feathers.[2] The eagerness with which flowers and feathers were applied to persons and things at this feast is striking, and seems to suggest that there was a special mysterious reason for the practice. As a matter of fact, our informant plainly indicates that the marriage feast essentially had a religious significance. Thus, one important moment during the dance was when an offering was made to the evil spirits; a man of the dancing party threw a plate with food out in the forest, calling out in a loud voice: "Take this food, thou dog of a demon, and do not come and spoil our feast!" And when the Father asked the Indians why all these ceremonies were performed, they answered: "It is because we fear the demon."[1]

---

[1] Church, *Aborigines of South America*, p. 147.

[2] Gumilla, *Historia natural de las naciones del Rio Orinoco*, i. 159-161.

The Lenguas in Paraguay celebrate the puberty of the girls with a special feast, called *yanmana*, the principal dance of which is the *sowalach*. A troop of lads, adorned with ostrich plumes, which are tied round the head and the waist, and wearing masks to represent evil spirits, issue from the forest and describe various circles round the girls, from time to time uttering prolonged shrill cries.[2] As the *yanmana* is celebrated in honour of girls at puberty, we understand why the women also take an active part in the feast. On this occasion the women are, contrary to the prevailing custom, adorned with ostrich feathers round the waist, much in the same way as the lads; on their heads, however, they wear no plumes. They perform a sort of dance, holding long canes with bunches of deer's hoofs tied at the top. These they strike on the ground, marking time to a chant, protecting in this way the girls in whose honour the feast is held.[3] I have mentioned this puberty dance before, among the Chorotis, and the mask-dance I shall explain in detail in a subsequent chapter. Let it suffice for the present to state that all ceremonies performed at the *yanmana* are purely religious and magical in character, the conjuration of the spirits being particularly carried out through the ostrich plumes and the masks.

That in the Indian consciousness the feather ornaments have originally been intimately connected with purely religious ideas, is also shown by such survivals as that mentioned by Dr. Nordenskiöld relating to the Christian Guarayús. "At Trinidad in Mojos," he says, "I have seen the Indians dancing outside the church after the Mass, wearing magnificent feather ornaments. Adorned with the many-coloured plumes of the macaws, the smaller parrots, and the toucans, artistically tied together so as to form tremendous feather ornaments, they proceeded, dancing with the greatest earnestness, into the sanctuary, where they knelt down before the image of the Virgin."[4] This is only one of the numerous cases which show how easily genuine heathen customs are by "converted" Indians amalgamated with religious Christian ceremonies. But such an amalgamation is psychologically possible only when there is an intrinsic relationship between what is their own and what is foreign. It certainly would never have occurred to the Indians to dance and put on feather ornaments at a Christian ceremony which they knew was purely religious, if dances and feather dresses would not, to their own mind, have been an efficacious means of influencing supernatural powers.

---

[1] Gumilla, *op. cit.*, i. 160.

[2] Grubb, *An Unknown People in an Unknown Land*, p. 178, illustration facing p. 180.

[3] Grubb, *op. cit.*, p. 177, illustration facing p. 182.

[4] Nordenskiöld, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

What Sr. Boggiani states with special reference to the Chamacoco in Paraguay no doubt holds true of most South American Indians. Having described the numerous feather ornaments worn among this tribe, he adds: " The majority of these ornaments are used, in general, in times of war and *during the religious dances and ceremonies ;* so that, except on these occasions, it is a rare thing to see a Chamacoco wearing ornaments."[1] The statement is significant, but the difficulty, as we have seen, is to decide in each case whether a dance is really of a religious nature.

The true character of the Indian feather ornaments is, however, more clearly set forth in various other instances. Thus, it is quite consistent with the theory advanced in the foregoing pages that, among many tribes, plumes as well as other " ornaments " are most worn by sorcerers and medicine-men when they are exercising their profession. On this point the statement which Sr. Boggiani makes with special reference to the Chamacoco is significant. " The fathers " (sorcerers), he says, " are the only ones who are wont to adorn themselves more frequently. . . . One of them, an old man, uglier than the devil, and one-eyed in addition, always used to wander about with the whole face painted red with *urucú*, and with the head, the ears, the neck, and the arms adorned with rich plumages which gave him an extremely ridiculous appearance."[2] The writer finishes his description of the ornaments of the Chamacoco sorcerer in these words: " All these objects, besides serving as personal ornaments, have importance as amulets. *All of them serve the purpose of conjuring the evil spirits and counteracting their malign influences.*"[3] Again, J. Pelleschi gives the following vivid description of a conjuration which he witnessed in a Mataco village in the Argentine Chaco, and which may be quoted here at length: " In the midst of the tolderia, in a sort of open square, I saw a circle of black figures, lighted up here and there by the flames of the great fire. These were women and men sitting on their heels silently smoking. Within the circle four robust men were running backwards and forwards in a space of about eight yards. Ostrich feathers and little bells were fastened to their ankles, wrists, head, and waist. In their hands, which were always lifted up in gesticulation, they held small gourds half-filled with grains, and these being shaken added to the din. They rushed about, shouting and yelling, panting and sweating, thrusting out their legs, stamping hard upon the ground. . . . By turns two of them would stop short, and squatting on the ground, shake their heads rapidly from left to right, backwards and forwards, groaning, blowing and spitting on the back, legs, head, and face of two sick persons who had been placed in their midst. . . . The spectators remained to do honour to the treatment and increase its efficacy, but not without fear that the *ahót* on quitting the body of the sick man might enter into theirs."[1]

---

[1] Boggiani, *Compendio de etnografia Paraguaya*, p. 109.

[2] Boggiani, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

[3] Boggiani, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

I think the true significance of the ostrich feathers " fastened to the ankles, wrists, head, and waist " of the four medicine-men appears more conspicuously when viewed in the light of the whole magical ceremony described. In fact, it is evident that they served the same purpose as the bells and the gourds, as well as the shouting, yelling, etc., with which the sorcerers tried to drive out the evil intruder from the patient's body.

The Araucanian *machi*, or medicine-man, when he was in the exercise of his duty, wore a special dress and certain ornaments, among them being a bundle of red plumes, applied to the head.[2] Equally conspicuous is the magical nature of the feathers and other ornaments worn by the Jahgan sorcerer, called *jacumusch*. When he proceeds to carry out his exorcism he is ornamented with plumes of sea-birds, having, moreover, the head covered with ashes and gravel, and the face painted in various colours.[3]

Among the Canelos Indians in Ecuador I found an interesting instance of a magical use of feather ornaments in reference to the medicine-men. When a medicine-man has taken the narcotic *huantuc* (prepared from the poisonous bush *Datura arborea*) and is invoking the spirits (*supai*), he has the face painted red, wears a beautiful feather crown, made of toucan feathers, on his head, and, moreover, plays a stringed instrument called *turumba*. "The demons," the Indians say, "are adorned in the same way with facial paintings and feather crowns, and when they see us wearing the same ornaments as they use themselves and hear the tunes of the instrument, they are pleased, and put in an appearance as our friends."

---

[1] Pelleschi, *Otto mesi nel Gran Ciacco*, p. 140.

[2] Guevara, *Psicolojia del pueblo Araucano*, p. 248.

[3] Bove, *Patagonia, Terra del Fuoco*, p. 134. Much the same is the ornamental equipment of the Ona sorcerer. See Cojazzi, *Gli Indii del Arcipelago Fueghino*, p. 64.

The ancient Tupis commonly used feathers of birds for magical purposes, and especially the *caraibs*, or medicine-men. When they were exercising their profession on festive occasions they were richly adorned with jackets, caps, and bracelets of beautiful many-coloured plumes. Even the *maracas*, or rattle-gourds, with which the spirits were conjured, were ornamented with parrot feathers.[1] Similarly, the diviners of the Tapuyas, when they were consulted about the harvest and had to give their oracular responses, were adorned with various plumes and other distinguishing ornaments.[2] What von Martius states of the medicine-man of the Manaos and other tribes on the lower Rio Negro is also significant. The *payé*, when summoned to cure a patient, usually calls on him at night, in the darkness, "holding his *maraca* in the right hand and *a bundle of red macaw feathers in the left*."[3] Similarly, Mr. Grubb tells us that at the *kyaiya*, a religious festival of the Lenguas, the witch-doctors stood in the middle of a ring of chanting men, "with gourds in their left hands and a bunch of ostrich plumes in the right."[4] That a magical power is ascribed to macaw and ostrich feathers, is in these cases also clearly brought out.

Whereas such instances only bear out in a general way the truth that feathers of certain birds are used as charms or means of conjuration, the following statement will show us in more detail how they are believed to act upon the spirits. The statement refers to the Piaroas on the right bank of the Orinoco, who practise an elaborate ceremony to expel the evil demon from a new-built house. As soon as the house is finished, the family goes out in search of a living bird, if possible a toucan, which is laid down near the entrance in a basket. The oldest patriarch pulls out some plumes from the tail and the wings, which he fastens with rosin to the top of a staff made of a special tree, called the devil-tree. Holding this in his left hand, he enters into the house, where he lights as many fires as there are households in the family. He fixes the staff in the middle of the house and returns to the rest of the assembly. Each man now takes as many plumes from the bird as there are women and children, and attaches them to the top of a stick made of another kind of wood, and plants it near the hearth, which is assigned to him as being suitable to the dignity of his age. Before the conjuration begins everybody adorns himself with his most beautiful ornaments, crowns of plumes, teeth of animals, pendants, and rattle-gourds, and drinks of a special hot liquor, called *bruquilla*, prepared by an old woman at a fire. All the men now enter the house and take possession of the hearth, but all the women and children retire to the forest. The old woman takes the toucan, which is flapping its wings, wraps it up in banana leaves, and places it across the entrance. This is to cut off the retreat of the evil spirit. The men meanwhile begin the conjuration, whirl the sticks with the plumes in all directions, dance, gesticulate, chant, shout, and menace the demon. The latter, frightened by the noise, tries to get off, but since the toucan impedes the passage he takes his refuge in the bird, which, being also exhausted by ill-treatment, is struggling to disengage itself from the leaves covering it. According to the demonology of the Piaroas the spirits are powerless against men armed with sacred signs, and if, in order to escape their pursuit, the devil resorts to an animal's body, he will remain imprisoned there until the death of that animal. Happy at the deliverance, the future inhabitants religiously keep the arms which have for ever expelled the enemy. The plumes are made into a crown or a collar, and the protecting staff is planted in a special corner of the roofing.[1]

---

[1] Lery, *Histoire d'un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil*, p. 274.

[2] de Laet, *Guilielmi Pisonis de Medicina Brasilensi, libri quatuor . . . cum apendice de Tapuyis et Chilensibus*, p. 282.

[3] v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 587.

[4] Grubb, *op. cit.*, p. 183.

The ceremony described is a typical conjuration, and is of special interest for our present purpose as being unmistakable evidence of the supernatural efficacy ascribed to feathers. The principle of conjuration in all religious ceremonies is not simply to frighten away the evil demons, but to compel and coerce them, totally to deprive them of their will and power, and thus to render them harmless. In the case in question this was effected not only by the dancing, shouting, etc., but most of all through the plumes attached to the sticks, which were whirled round by the sorcerers and radiated a mysterious irresistible power. The bird itself, placed at the entrance, acted as a charm, and at last served as a receptacle for the mortified spirit. According to the general rule in such cases, women and children were not allowed to take part in the ceremony, but were sent away, and the statement that each man had to provide "as many plumes as there were women and children," shows that it was particularly performed to protect these weaker members of the family against the evil intruder.

---

[1] Chaffanjon, *L'Orénoque et le Caura*, p. 202 *sq.*

Just as in the case described above the feathered sticks managed by the sorcerers served as magical charms, so the Indians not seldom "ornament" their magical instruments with feathers, in order to enhance their supernatural efficacy. Thus, when the rattle-gourds, the most common of all religious instruments in South America, are sometimes adorned with plumes of parrots or other birds, we may be sure that these plumes are meant to be something more than pure ornaments. Such feathered rattle-gourds have been used, for instance, by the Indians of Guiana. According to the Rev. W. H. Brett, the gourd had a round stick run through the middle of it; one end of the stick formed the handle of the instrument; the other had a long string, to which beautiful feathers were attached, wound round it in spiral circles. The gourd itself was usually painted red.[1] Dr. Roth, describing the same feathered rattle-gourd, says that, according to what an Arawak medicine-man assured him, the feathers must not only be those of a special kind of parrot (*Psittacus æstivus*), but that they must be plucked from the bird while alive. A string of beetles' wings may be superadded.[2] A similar ornamented rattle-gourd is mentioned by Dr. Koch-Grünberg from among the Kobéua of the Rio Caiary-Uaupés. The upper end of the instrument was adorned with a bundle of parrot feathers, the gourd itself was beautifully painted with *carayurú* and ornamented with various figures.[3] Again, de Lery gives a detailed description of the feathered magical rattles of the ancient Tupis. Their *maracas* almost amounted to real fetishes. For festive occasions, the upper part of the stick, which was run through the gourd, was adorned with rich plumages, and the nether end was fixed in the ground outside the house. Three or four such ornamented *maracas* were planted along the house of each family and left there for some weeks. Offerings were also made to them. The Tupis believed that when they rattled these *maracas* the spirits spoke to them through the instruments and instructed them in their use[1]; that is, the spirits were at first conjured and compelled to enter the gourds, and thus obliged to yield wholly to the sorcerers. The supernatural power of such gourds is not only due to the mysterious hollow sound produced by the seeds or shells contained in them, but also to the paintings and the figures of animals, human spirits, etc., engraved on them, and lastly to the feathers attached to them. As for the ornamental paintings and engravings, I shall have an opportunity to deal with these rattles again elsewhere.

---

[1] Brett, *The Indian Tribes of Guiana*, p. 285. Cp. Schomburgk, *Reisen in British-Guiana*, ii. 171.

[2] Roth, *Animism and Folklore of the Guiana Indians*, p. 330 *sqq.*

[3] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, ii. 156.

The fact that among the Guayquiries of the Orinoco the flutes with which music was made at the marriage ceremony before described were "richly ornamented with feathers"[2] was no doubt due to similar considerations. Among many tribes in Brazil and in the northern part of South America, flutes are used as magical instruments at the religious feasts and dances. Like other instruments of the same class, they are often painted and ornamented.

Of great interest from the same point of view are the dancing-shields and the ornamented rattle-lances which, according to Dr. Koch-Grünberg, the Desana of the Rio Umari-Igarapé used at the Yurupary-dances, and of which especially the latter was a real piece of art. The upper part of the lance was adorned with ornamental paintings and engravings as well as with feathers, human hair, and monkey's hair. Blue and violet-red down were fastened round the wood so as to form a sort of mosaic. At the nether part of the lance, in a small hollow, some pebbles were put in, which made a rattling sound when the lance was shaken. The dancer, in using the lance, at first shook it several times and thereafter threw it on his shoulders and allowed it to vibrate and rattle.[3] It is strange that Dr. Koch-Grünberg himself has not realized the true character of these dancing-"ornaments." He remarks that "both the dancing-shield and the rattle-lance no doubt have originated as real weapons of war,"[1] and seems to believe that they were now mere playthings at the dances. Yet it is evident that they were serious instruments of conjuration, fully comparable with the rattle-gourds, drums, flutes, etc. This is consistent with the fact that they were used at the Yurupary-dance, which was of a profound religious significance. The savage deals with the evil supernatural powers in the same way as with his natural human enemies. The shield adorned with the plumes was used to ward off the spirits, with which the Indians entered into contact during the dance, and the ornamental rattle-lance likewise served to conjure them. The feathers in this respect were supposed to have the same magical efficacy as the human hair, the monkey's hair, and the figures engraved on the lance.

---

[1] Lery, *op. cit.*, pp. 274, 279, 280. Cp. *The Captivity of Hans Stade of Hesse* (Hakluyt Society), pp. 123, 147 *sq.* Similar feathered rattle-gourds are used by the Apapocuva-Guaranis in southern Brazil. The feathers which these Guaranis used for that purpose were obtained from certain magical birds, and were combined to tufts which were called "*poty* flowers." The magical *poty* flowers were also used for other decorative purposes. See Nimuendajú-Unkel, *Religion der Apapocúva-Guarani* (*Zeitsch. f. Ethnologie*, 1914, Heft. II., u. iii.), pp. 341, 343. As to the decoration of rattle-gourds with feathers, see also Arvelo, *Vida indiana*, p. 52 (relating to the tribes of Venezuela).

[2] Gumilla, *op. cit.*, i. 169. See *supra*, p. 84.

[3] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 344, 345.

Much the same was the significance of the big feathered dancing-staff which was formerly used by the Chiriguanos and the Chanés. The staff was about four metres in length, and to its top big ostrich plumes were attached, being arranged in a circle in such a way that the whole thing was like a huge umbrella. This ornamental staff, which was called *yandugua* (*yandu* = ostrich), was managed by the leader of the dance, who marked the time with it.[2] The Catholic missionaries, to whom we owe our best information concerning the Chiriguanos, have not established either the true nature of the dance or the significance of the *yandugua*. The dance, however, as I have mentioned before, was performed to conjure the evil spirits, the *aña*, who were supposed to appear especially at the great drinking-feast. The *yandugua* again served exactly the same magical purpose as the long rattle-canes or staffs adorned with bunches of deer's hoofs at the top, which are used by many Chaco tribes at certain religious ceremonies.[3]

The ancient Incas, during one of their feasts held in honour of the sun-god, used a lance adorned with feathers of many colours, extending from the point to the socket and fastened with rings of gold. The ensign also served as a banner in time of war. It was held by five couriers or messengers of the Sun, who were Incas of royal blood, and served as a magical charm to purify the town from mysterious evils. The couriers ran through the streets in all directions, brandishing their lances, whereas the people with exclamations and gesticulations pretended to rid themselves of the evils attached to their persons, believing that the couriers would banish them with their sacred ensigns.[1] This purification ceremony by means of the feathered lances offers an interesting parallel to the conjuration just mentioned with reference to the Piaroas.

---

[1] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 345.

[2] Del Campana, *Notizie intorno ai Ciriguani* (*Archivio per l'antropologia e la ethnologia*, Firenze, 1902), p. 105.

[3] See Karsten, *Indian Dances in the Gran Chaco* (*Öfversigt af Finska Vetenskaps-Societetens Förhandlingar*, Bd. LVII., Afd. B, No. 6), p. 23.

It is more difficult to prove the superstitious origin of the feather ornaments in some other cases. Yet when, for instance, warriors, before marching out to battle, adorn not only themselves, but also their weapons, with plumes of different kinds, there is good reason for assuming that these ornaments, at least in many cases, are nothing but charms. Thus, the feathers with which the arrows are often provided are probably not merely thought to direct the course of the weapon, but also to ward off evil influences in the battle, and thus to secure good luck. This is more conspicuous in cases where the bow itself is ornamented with feathers. Such was the custom, for instance, among the Bororó of the Xingú, where the chiefs on festive occasions wore bows adorned with magnificent feather ornaments.[2] An Indian chief killed at the Rio Doce, according to the Prince of Wied-Neuwied, had a bow both ends of which were adorned with bunches of the many-coloured plumes of the toucan. The chief himself wore bundles of red parrot feathers round the upper arm and the forearm, the thighs, and the calves.[3]

That the Indians generally adorn themselves for a battle much in the same way as for an ordinary dance or feast, is a well-known fact which could be illustrated with numerous instances. The Tupis, for example, seem to have worn their magnificent feather ornaments especially in battle, being on these occasions dressed in jackets, head-gears, and bracelets made of many-coloured feathers, and having special circular " ornaments " of ostrich plumes applied to the nether part of the back.[4] Of the Araucanians in Chile we hear that they used to adorn themselves for a war with plumes of birds and with tails of foxes and other animals, " in order to acquire astuteness and rapidity."[5] Evidently it was thought that the bird and the fox would convey their spirit to the warrior who wore the plumes and the tail. Again, among the Guaycurús in Chaco, when a warrior prepared himself for his profession, he painted the body in various colours from head to foot, applied a band of red twist round the head, covered the whole body with small plumes, arranged in a certain order, and likewise made balls of them which he wore hanging from the cincture.[1] Similarly, the Caraipunas in south-western Amazonia, in their dances and on the eve of battle, adorn their head, arms, breast, and legs with bright-coloured feathers. "In place of ear-rings, the warrior wears crocodile teeth, and in his nose a small cane with red feathers at each end in the form of a feather duster. His neck and breast are covered with rows of fragrant black seeds, from his shoulders hang feather epaulettes, and the upper part of each arm is tightly bound with a black string."[2] Again, the ornamental equipment which the ancient Indians of Maynas put on when they prepared themselves for a battle is described by Father Figueroa much as follows: All paint their body in red colour. The chiefs and other principal men, who have such ornaments, take their many-coloured crowns and garlands which are curiously woven of feathers and interlaced with plumes of macaws and white and black herons. These they put on the head and round the neck, hanging likewise on the breast broad collars, composed of the teeth of tigers and other animals, as well as of men killed on other occasions. Upon their hair, which they keep long, they put a scalp obtained from their slain enemies, and of the same hair they also make a cincture with which they girdle themselves, etc.[3]

---

[1] Garcilasso de la Vega, *Comentarios reales*, bk. vii., c. 6.

[2] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 483.

[3] Wied-Neuwied, *Reisen nach Brasilien*, ii. 13.

[4] Lery, *op. cit.*, p. 234. Ternaux, *Voyages, relations et mémoires de l'Amérique*, pp. 269, 270.

[5] Guevara, *op. cit.*, p. 133. Medina, *Aborigenes de Chile*, p. 125.

The important part feathers thus play as war ornaments, and the way in which they are applied to the body, make it evident that they have been used from other than purely ornamental or æsthetic motives. In fact, as I have shown before, the Indian warfare customs and ceremonies cannot be properly understood unless we know the religious ideas with which they are connected. What has been said about the body-painting for war also holds true of the other adornments put on for such occasions. The Indian, when he marches out to battle, is aware that he has not only to fight against his human enemies, but also against malevolent superhuman powers. This is the reason why charms, consisting of all sorts of "ornaments," are equally commonly worn in battle as at purely religious feasts and ceremonies. As for the plumes and feather crowns with which chiefs especially adorn themselves for the battle, they can certainly not, as Spencer, von den Steinen, and Hirn believed, be explained merely as later developments of proudly arranged spoils of chase, by which successful hunters proclaim their achievements. Their significance is deeper; they are first of all magical charms. They convey their inherent power to the warrior who wears them, thus protecting his head or other particularly delicate or exposed parts of his body, or they directly serve to conjure the demons roaming about in the battle. From this point of view, in my opinion, all feather ornaments mentioned in the foregoing pages have to be explained.

---

[1] Charlevoix, *Historia del Paraguay*, i. 138.

[2] Church, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

[3] Figueroa, *Relación de las misiones de la Compañia de Jesús en el pais de los Maynas*, p. 257. Cp. also, on the Jibaros, Karsten, *Blood Revenge, War, and Victory Feasts among the Jibaros of Eastern Ecuador*, p. 25.

Various other instances may be adduced in which the magical significance of feathers is brought out more or less conspicuously. Knowing the elaborate measures the Indians usually take to keep off the revengeful spirits of the dead, we may expect to find that feathers have been largely used as "signs of sorrow." In this respect the festive dress which Professor von den Steinen noticed among the Bororó, and which seems to have been especially used at the death-feasts, is of interest. The arms, as well as adjacent parts of the mourner's breast, were entirely enwrapped in green parrot feathers, over the navel there was a small stripe of feathers, and on the back a part of the shoulders and a part of the loins were in the same way covered with down. From one ear to the other a transverse stroke of white down, resembling big moustaches, was drawn. The hair was smeared with *urucú*, and to the head red macaw feathers were attached. The top of the head round the tonsure was likewise adorned with a small crown of macaw feathers, surrounded by a handful of other small feathers, loosely fastened.[1] This whole equipment offers a good specimen of a real magical apparatus of feathers protecting the most delicate parts of the body against the feared spirit.

Sr. Boggiani relates that among the Machicui in Paraguay, when the inhabitants of a village, where a death has recently taken place, are travelling, they are in the habit of tying bunches of the black feathers of the vulture or the chimango to the branches of the tree under which the party encamps. "*These amulets,*" Boggiani says,

---

[1] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 476.

"*have the power to keep off the evil spirit of the dead.*"[1] A similar instance relating to the Chaco Indians is mentioned by the Argentine explorer Dominguez. When he reached the Guaná Indians in the interior of Northern Chaco, he was surprised at finding on the burial-place of the natives, situated just outside the village, a big pole adorned with a huge bundle of plumes at the top. On inquiry he found that the ornamented staff was a "mystic ensign," by which the Indians professed to "frighten away the evil spirit when he attempted to draw near in order to disturb the peace of the defunct."[2]

The Tupis used to kill their captives taken in war with certain peculiar ceremonies. Perhaps the most striking of the measures taken on this occasion was the elaborate "decoration" of both the prisoner and the executioner with feathers and painting. The former was previously painted all over the body and smeared with the juice of a certain tree, whereupon he was entirely covered with red feathers, which were fastened by means of the adhesive juice. The executioner likewise had the whole body daubed with a white clay, and wore a skilfully-made feather dress which covered the breast and the stomach, and, moreover, was provided with a sort of wings.[3] That this decoration of the slayer and his victim was due to the same superstitious ideas as the dance and the other ceremonies performed on the same occasion, is a matter beyond doubt. The spirit of the slain enemy is filled with the desire of revenge, and his anger is, of course, particularly directed against the executioner, who therefore has to observe various means of precaution. In fact, we hear that afterwards, among other things, he had to put himself to bed for some time in order to escape the revengeful spirit which was seeking his life.[4] The winged feather dress most probably served to protect him against this danger at the critical moment, and the feathers and painting with, which the captive was so profusely adorned before the execution, may have been intended to counteract or paralyze the evil influences arising from himself.

Sir Everard F. im Thurn states that the Indians of Guiana use two kinds of collars, which differ from each other in that one is made of the feathers of a white heron, the other of the black feathers of the powis. In either case the feather is stripped from the quill, and the long pieces of each are made into a fringe which, when hung round the neck, covers the shoulders and upper part of the chest. "The herons' feathers," says the writer, "are worn especially by men engaged in running foot-races, the black when dancing, and sometimes when paddling in canoes."[1] He suggests that the original reason for using such ornaments on these occasions is "to obtain some slight shelter from the heat of the sun by men engaged in violent exercise." For my own part, I have no hesitation in saying that they were simply charms of the same kind as the Indians usually wear on critical occasions, as at races and on river expeditions. The white heron's feathers probably were supposed to give the Indian strength for the foot-race; the black collar, again, may—on account of the prophylactic power ascribed to the black colour—have been regarded as an efficacious protection against the dangers connected with canoeing. It may thus have been a charm of the same kind as the prophylactic painting for canoeing, which has been mentioned in the chapter on body-painting. The Indian belief that feathers of birds really convey something of the spirit of the bird to the person wearing them is also illustrated in the practice of the Onas. Before they engage in foot-races they take off all their clothes and tie a bunch of bird's feathers to the left arm, being persuaded that with these they will be able to run faster.[2] The Onas thus ascribe much the same magical power to feathers as the Araucanians, who likewise adorned themselves with plumes for a battle.

---

[1] Boggiani, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

[2] Criado, *Obras escogidas de Don Juan Dominguez*, p. 193 *sq.*

[3] Gottfriedt, *Neue Welt und Amerikanische Historien*, pp. 143, 144. Soarez de Souza, *Tratado descriptivo do Brazil*, p. 334 *sqq.* Lery, *op. cit.*, p. 256 *sq.* *The Captivity of Hans Stade of Hesse* (Hakluyt Society), p. 155.

[4] Gottfriedt, *op. cit.*, p. 146. *The Captivity of Hans Stade of Hesse*, p. 159.

Among the Warraus of Guiana, when a girl reaches puberty, one of the ceremonies performed is to adorn her with white down of various birds, especially of the *Crax* and the *Ardea*. The down is fastened with gum to the head, which is shaved clean of hair, as well as to the arms and the thighs.[3] The ideas connected with the Indian puberty ceremonies I have stated before. They are, as we have seen, essentially of a religious character; and it is evident that the decoration of the girl with feathers is only one of the various precautions taken on this critical occasion in order to protect her or give her resistance against evil spirits.

---

[1] Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p. 306.

[2] Cojazzi, *Gli Indii dell' Arcipelago Fueghino*, p. 64. Cp. Gallardo, *Los Onas*, p. 162.

[3] Schomburgk, *Reisen in British-Guiana*, i. 168.

It is no doubt due to similar considerations when the Karayá in Brazil cover the arms and legs of small children with white down, which is fastened by means of rosin. A child, says Dr. Krause, wore such feathers round the upper arm and the calf. He adds the significant statement that the *dead* are treated in the same way.[1]

Among the Mauhés in Brazil, when the young men became marriageable, they had to pass through a painful operation which consisted in the novice having to put his forearm in a gourd filled with poisonous ants, which were allowed to bite the arm. For this ceremony the upper arm was adorned with many-coloured feathers.[2] This trial belongs to a class of initiation ceremonies which I shall describe more fully in a following chapter. It may suffice here to state that the aim of the operation was to " harden " the young man by purifying his blood from the pollution effected by evil spirits, the poison of the ants acting as an efficacious antidote against them. This being so, the assumption is obvious that the feathers were applied to the arm simply to aid in the conjuration of the spirit from which the novice was to be purified.

The Lenguas in Paraguay, like most Chaco Indians, commonly use feathers as head-ornaments, which, according to Mr. Grubb, are " sometimes strung together and sometimes worn singly, and are often cut into elaborate shapes." The most valued and expensive article of head-dress is a broad red woollen band, to which are sewn diagonal lines, squares, or circles of small buttons, cut out from snails' shells. The top is fringed with bright scarlet feathers taken from the spoonbill or flamingo. Some have a woollen chin-strap attached and beaded woollen tassels hanging over the ears. " The head-dress," Mr. Grubb adds, " is regarded as a charm by the wearer, especially against the evil spirit of the swamps." They are worn chiefly when visiting or feasting, or during courtship.[3]

Mr. Grubb, moreover, mentions the feather anklets of the Lenguas, which are made from the wing feathers of a heron, bound together on a string. He says that they are not only worn as ornaments, but considered as safeguards against snake-bite, as the reptile, in striking at the ankle, may chance to miss the flesh and expend the poison on the feathers.[4] He might have added that they are at the same time regarded as magical charms, since with the snake's poison an evil spirit is believed to enter the foot. Anklets and leg-circlets are, however, used as charms for other special purposes also, for instance to give the leg strength for a race. They are not always made of feathers, but, as we shall find later on, more often of other materials.

---

[1] Krause, *In den Wildnissen Brasiliens*, p. 239.
[2] v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 403.
[3] Grubb, *op. cit.*, p. 70.
[4] Grubb, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

The Matacos in certain parts of the Argentine Chaco not only use ostrich plumes as head-ornaments, but also apply them to the face as a sort of beard, which gives them a grotesque and ferocious appearance. Sometimes they wear them round the wrists in the way of bracelets.[1] Artificial moustaches and beards of feathers are sometimes used by the Indians instead of facial painting or tattooing; their object is probably the same, namely, to protect the mouth—a part through which evil spirits are especially supposed to enter the body. The Abipones, again, according to Dobrizhoffer, used to tie the wings of a huge vulture to the flap of one of their ears,[2] and this peculiar ornament, no doubt, was worn for similar superstitious reasons.

Among some Indian tribes, as the Chacobo[3] in North Bolivia, the Guató[4] and the Kuliséhu Indians[5] in Central Brazil, it is customary to insert small feather ornaments in the flaps of the ears or in the septum of the nose. These ornaments may be treated of with more detail in the following chapter, in connection with the charms of rings, sticks, teeth, etc., which the Indians attach to their ears, nose, and lips in order to keep off evil influences.

The Tupis, whose festive feather ornaments I have already mentioned, used to cover delicate parts of the body in various ways. According to de Lery, they " decorated the body, the arms, and the legs with feathers so that they seemed downy like birds. Frontals of plumes, bright-red, light-red, or in other colours, were applied to the head. Ornaments of small light toucan feathers, about three inches in diameter, were fastened to each cheek. Round the thighs they wore big ornaments of ostrich plumes, called *araroya*, which were attached to the knees by means of cotton strings."[6] Nothing is

[1] Baldrich, *Las comarcas virgenes*, p. 231.

[2] Dobrizhoffer, *An Account of the Abipones*, i. 115.

[3] Nordenskiöld, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

[4] Schmidt, *Indianerstudien in Zentral-Brasilien*, p. 182.

[5] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

[6] de Lery, *op. cit.*, p. 116. Hans Stade describes the *araroya* as " an ornament made of birds' tails and of square shape," and says that it was tied behind the neck, so that it projected above the head (*Captivity of Hans Stade of Hesse* [Hakluyt Society], p. 64).

stated about the particular occasions for which these elaborate feather arrangements were made; yet it is impossible to conceive them either simply as decorative ornaments, or as substitutes for clothes. Their object must have been the same as in the numerous analogous instances examined in this chapter.

A significant statement, illustrating the "medical" and magical use of feathers, may be added with reference to the Xingú Indians. "It was a 'medicine,' practised daily, to stick feathers on the body," says Professor von den Steinen, speaking of the body-painting and the feather ornaments of the Bororó. When, in the village, there was an intermittent fever and the children were frequently sick, this treatment was more often resorted to, and thus it was absolutely impossible to find the limit between what was medicine and what was adornment. The part of the body where pain was felt was smeared with heated rosin and tightly covered with down or feathers. Women who were taken ill were frequently seen with feathers covering sundry spots of their body. One woman, complaining of fever, appeared with the hair, face, and breast covered with this powerful "medicine." Children were seen wearing real sleeves of white ducks' feathers, fastened with black rosin. In order to attach feathers to the face a band, broad as the finger, was tied along the hair-edge; its ends, at the ears, were sometimes connected with a transverse stripe drawn between the nose and the lips. The intermediate space was covered with feathers, so that the whole thing was like a mask.[1]

More clearly the supernatural efficacy, which Indian superstition ascribes to feathers, can hardly be brought out. It may be added that the Bororó not only apply this "medicine" to living men, but also to the dead. The bodies, after they have been buried for some time, are exhumed, whereupon the skull and the bones are painted with *urucú* and carefully decked with scarlet feathers.[2] The feathers serve the same purpose as the painting: to keep off evil spirits from the remains of the deceased, and thus prevent decomposition and render a future rebirth possible.

The facts adduced may suffice as evidence in support of the theory I have set forth with regard to the Indian feather ornaments. In fact, it is with these "ornaments" exactly as it is with the painting of the body and the face. The showy colours displayed by many South American birds of course attract the Indian eye in the same natural way as the red colour of the dye obtained from the *urucú*-plant. Nevertheless, it is doubtful whether feathers and plumes are ever by primitive tribes, who are unaffected by European civilization, worn merely from æsthetic motives or as pure "ornaments." Special ideas nearly always seem to underlie this custom. In some cases rich plumages are worn and shown off as a sort of hunting-trophies. But even then superstitious ideas may be connected with them. But perhaps most often such ornaments are used for purely religious and magical ends, either to protect the wearer and to give him strength, or directly to conjure and exorcise the supernatural enemies, by which the Indian believes himself to be constantly surrounded.

---

[1] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 475.

[2] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 508.

CHAPTER IV

EAR-, LIP-, NOSE-ORNAMENTS; NECKLACES, BRACELETS, ANKLETS, RATTLES, ETC.

JUST as, for instance, the feather crowns of the Indian chiefs, looked upon from a civilized point of view, seem to be nothing but beautiful ornaments, or perhaps "proudly arranged spoils of chase," so the superficial observer in regarding the Indian necklaces, ear-rings, lip- and nose-ornaments, etc., naturally feels inclined to believe that they serve no other object than to embellish the appearance and to attract the opposite sex. The inference is easy, for ornaments like necklaces, bracelets, and ear-rings are not only worn by savages, but also by civilized peoples. And yet it would certainly be a great mistake to infer from the external similarity of the customs a similarity of the motives from which they have sprung. There are sufficient facts in support of the assumption that these ornaments also have originally had nothing to do with æsthetic considerations, but have served purely practical ends. Their use essentially depends on the same magical ideas as does that of the Indian ornaments hitherto considered.

The assertion, as far as it is generalized to hold true of all South America, of course can only be established in the same degree of probability as most theories concerning primitive religious and magical customs. Few ethnologists have made detailed inquiries into these matters in South America, and the Indians, as we know, are very reluctant to reveal ideas which refer to their innermost psychic life. There are three circumstances to take into especial consideration when we are trying to make out the true significance of the ornaments with which we are dealing: first, the material of which they are made; second, the ceremonies which accompany their first using; and third, the occasions on which they are worn.

As I have pointed out before in dealing with the body-painting and the hair customs, it is a general Indian belief that evil spirits preferably attack man through such delicate and usually uncovered parts of the body as the head and the face. Especially those spots where there seems to be a natural opening of the head—the ears, the eyes, the nostrils, and the mouth—may serve as entrances for the mysterious intruders, who, after having obtained possession of a part of the body, cause diseases and disorders of every kind. This is the Indian's diagnosis of the cause of evils like deafness, blindness, headache, and many internal ailments. Nothing is, therefore, more natural than that he should try to protect these critical parts in various ways, either by natural coverings or by means of things that have the character of magical charms. Simple clothes or elaborate masks with which the head and face are covered for certain religious dances and conjurations, head-gears of various kinds, as well as paintings, tattooings, and decoration with feathers, are all different means adopted to this end. That, moreover, the ornaments inserted in the ear-lobes, the lips and the nose, the necklaces, bracelets, etc., are nothing but charms, it will be my task to show in this chapter.

Ear- and lip-ornaments are, or have been, extremely common among the South American Indians. In Chaco, for example, ear-ornaments have been used by most tribes belonging to the Guaycurú-group, and are still worn by the Lenguas, the Chorotis, and the Ashluslays, whereas the custom of piercing the lips and inserting *tembetas* has been prevalent among Guarani-tribes, such as the ancient Tupis, the Chiriguanos, and the Cainguá, and guaranized peoples like the Chanés and the Tapiete. Among the Toba-Pilagás and the Chorotis the ear-ornaments consist of wooden plugs or pieces of cane, which sometimes are of a tremendous size. They are worn mostly by men, seldom by women. The Chorotis, I think, gave me the true explanation as to the significance of these ornaments when they told me that they are worn to prevent the evil spirits, the *mohsek*, from penetrating into the ears. Their hugeness and peculiar form evidently acts as a deterrent upon the spirits, and there seems to be the idea that they are the more efficacious the larger they are. We cannot doubt that much the same ideas are connected with these ornaments among other tribes. Thus it is difficult to believe, for instance, that the wooden plugs which the Tobas formerly used to wear in their ear-lobes, and which were so thick and heavy that they nearly hung down to the shoulders,[1] were meant to be real embellishments. Again, the ear-disks of the Lenguas Mr. Grubb describes much as follows: The wooden ear-disks are worn chiefly by men, the piercing of the ears taking place sometimes early, sometimes at a later period of the child's life. The lobes are usually perforated with a sharp thorn or bone needle, and a piece of grass or a thin stick is afterwards inserted to prevent the wound from closing. As age advances the disks are enlarged; one and a half inches in diameter is the average size. They are usually made from willow wood, which is very light and affords a smooth surface. "They are without ornamentation, except in the case of the witch-doctors, who decorate them with pieces of polished tin in the shape of stars or crosses, some going as far as to cut pieces of imported mirror to fit them, by means of which they profess to be able to see the shadow of the spirit passing out from or entering into the person on whom they are operating."[1]

---

[1] Cardús, *Las misiones franciscanas*, p. 263. Cp. Boggiani, *Compendio de etnografia Paraguaya*, p. 18. Campos, *De Tarija a la Asunción*, p. 105.

The statement that the sorcerers are in the habit of adorning their ear-disks with pieces of tin in the shape of stars or crosses, and with pieces of mirrors in which they profess to see the shadows of the spirits, is evidence that these ornaments are amulets or charms with which the spirits are conjured. It may be added that all Indians are very fond of adorning themselves with pieces of glass or mirror imported by the whites, obviously regarding such things as possessing some mysterious power. That objects like mirrors should be regarded as charms by primitive peoples is indeed quite natural. When the Indian sees his own image, or the image of another person, in the mirror, he believes that it is the *soul* that is reflected in the object —just as he regards the image reflected in the water, or a photograph, as a projection of the soul of the original. Since, according to the principles of sympathetic magic, it is possible to conjure and control a man or a supernatural being through his soul, it is easy to understand that the object which renders the image should be regarded as a magical medium. Similarly, this may partly be the reason why resplendent metals—for instance plates of gold, silver, tin, etc.—are so commonly used as amulets.

Dobrizhoffer describes the ear-ornaments of the Abipones as follows: "The ears of very young children of both sexes are always perforated. Few of the men wear ear-rings, but some of the older ones insert a small piece of cow's horn, wood, or bone, or woollen thread of various colours, or a little knot of horn into their ears. Almost all the married women have ear-rings. . . . They twist a very long palm leaf, 2 inches wide, into a spiral, like a bundle of silk thread. This roll is gradually pushed farther and farther into the hole of the ear, by which means, in the course of years, the skin of the ear is so much stretched, and the hole so much enlarged, that it folds very tightly round the whole of the palm-leaf spire, and hangs almost down to the shoulders."[1]

---

[1] Grubb, *An Unknown People in an Unknown Land*, p. 72.

In this case we recognize things of magical power in the cow's horn, the coloured woollen thread, and the ear-rings of twisted palm leaves. The cow's horn, as also the teeth and claws of wild animals, are frequently used as charms. Moreover, as the wool is the hair of the sheep, the Indians generally ascribe some magical efficacy to the thread twisted of the wool, and this efficacy is further enhanced through painting or dyeing the thread. And lastly, it seems to be a common Indian belief that the palm is, as it were, a "sacred" tree, and that especially its bark and leaves possess certain remarkable "antiseptic" or prophylactic properties. This belief explains their comparatively frequent use for medical and magical purposes.

Teeth of wild animals are mostly used for collars, but sometimes they are also worn as ornaments in the ears or the lips. Thus, the Indians of Orinoco for great feasts used to insert a tremendous tooth of a cayman in each ear-lobe,[2] and likewise among the Caraipunas in north Bolivia warriors wore crocodile teeth instead of ear-rings as ornaments.[3] These things are regarded as charms of great power according to principles which presently will be set forth in more detail.

The custom of piercing the ears for the insertion of ornaments of one kind or another is also found among many Brazilian tribes. Thus the Botocudos are famous for the grotesque wooden plugs which they wear not only in their lips, but also in their ear-lobes.[4] Of the Marauhas, between the rivers Jutai and Jaury in north-west Brazil, von Martius says that their national badges consist of small wooden plugs which they wear in the ear-lobes and in both lips.[5] Dr. Koch-Grünberg mentions the same custom among the tribes visited by him. The Tuyúka, for instance, had the ears perforated, and formerly used to wear pieces of wood or reeds in them.[6] The Makúna, the Yabahána, the Yahúna, and other tribes of the

---

[1] Dobrizhoffer, *An Account of the Abipones*, ii. 27.

[2] Gumilla, *Historia natural de las naciones del Rio Orinoco*, i. 141.

[3] Church, *Aborigines of South America*, p. 131.

[4] v. Martius, *Beiträge zur Ethnographie Amerika's*, i. 319. Wied-Neuwied, *Reise nach Brasilien*, ii. 5.

[5] v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 427.

[6] Koch-Grünberg, *Zwei Jahre unter den Indianern*, i. 322.

Rio Apaporís likewise pierced the ear-lobes, the septum of the nose, and the lower lip, inserting in the holes small plugs or light pieces of wood.[1] Similar statements exist relating to the tribes of the Xingú. Thus, among the Bororó the ear-lobes of young girls are pierced by their future husbands.[2] Among the tribes of the Kuliséhu this custom is only practised with men, the ornament inserted being always a feather.[3] The Jibaros in eastern Ecuador also insert reeds in the lobes of their ears, which ornaments are called *arusa*, and sometimes are 30 to 40 centimetres in length. The Indians allege that these ornaments make them strong and valiant. Hence they are particularly appreciated by warriors, who wear them as big as possible.

Hans Stade, whilst speaking of the peculiar worship which the Tupis paid to their magical rattle-gourds or *maracas*, mentions some ear-ornaments which the sorcerers used on these occasions. The sorcerers commanded that each man should paint his *maraca* red, ornament it with feathers, etc. They placed themselves at the head, and had their rattle-gourds close to them on the ground. The others stuck theirs hard by. "*Each one gave these jugglers presents, which were arrows, feathers, and ornaments to hang to the ears.*"[4] That both the arrows and feathers and "the ornaments to hang to the ears" were magical charms seems clear even from the circumstances under which these "presents" were given to the sorcerers.

The feathers that some Indians are in the habit of inserting in the ear-lobes or in the septum of the nose may be explained as amulets which, by virtue of the power inherent in feathers, are supposed to keep off evil influences from these parts of the face. Among the Guató on the upper Rio Paraguay it is customary for women and children to wear small bunches of red and blue macaw feathers in the ear-lobes, which are perforated for this purpose. They are attached to the ear by means of a small string made of the fibres of a palm.[5] The Yuracaré men on festive occasions wear in the ears pendants of glass beads, feathers, etc.,[6] and among the Chacobo both men and women wear a small ornament, consisting of a red toucan feather, in the septum of the nose. The nose is pierced when the child is ten or twelve years old. As long as the wound is not healed a wooden stick is kept in it; later on the feather ornament is inserted. The women not only have the septum, but also the nostrils, perforated. The ornaments worn in them, in everyday life, consist of small sticks, painted black with charcoal; but at feasts they consist of feathers.[1]

---

[1] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, ii. 281. Cp. ii. 302.

[2] v. d. Steinen, *Unter den Naturvölkern Central-Brasiliens*, p. 501.

[3] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

[4] *The Captivity of Hans Stade of Hesse* (Hakluyt Society), p. 147.

[5] Schmidt, *Indianerstudien in Zentral-Brasilien*, pp. 182, 298. Castelnau, *Expédition dans les parties centrales de l'Amérique du Sud*, ii. 373.

[6] Nordenskiöld, *Indianer och hvita*, p. 69.

Ornaments for the nose are, on the whole, comparatively rare in South America. A striking instance of such nose-ornaments we have in the case of the Miranhas, who wear big cylindriform pieces of wood or mussel shells in the perforated wings of the nose, which dreadfully distort the face. The ornament is worn by both sexes, but the women carry the distortion farther than the men.[2] The Yabahána and Makúna men of the Rio Apaporís wear in the septum of the nose thin polished staffs of black palm wood, which are about 30 centimetres in length. The ear-lobes and the lower lip are likewise perforated and ornamented with plugs or reeds.[3] Again, the ancient Quillacingas or "Moon-noses" in Ecuador received their name by the Incas on account of the crescent-shaped golden ornaments which their principal chiefs used to wear in the septum of the nose, and which fell on the upper lip like a kind of moustache.[4] In our own days such half-moons are worn in the septum of the nose, for instance, by the Carib men in Guiana[5] and by the women among the Indians of the Rio Envira in Peru,[6] the ornaments of the latter being of silver. Professor von den Steinen mentions similar crescents of tin among the Bororó, and gives some further details which reveal the true origin of such ornaments. He states that the Xingú tribes used to combine either the small claws of certain rodents, or the large claws of the giant ant-eater, two by two in such a way that they formed a half-moon. These half-moons were worn as ornaments for the breast, and also in the lips. "The procedure is interesting," Professor von den Steinen adds, "because the tin crescents do not in any way betray their origin from two animals' claws."[7]

Probably this is the origin of such ornaments everywhere in

---

[1] Nordenskiöld, *op. cit.*, pp. 102, 104.

[2] v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 536.

[3] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, ii. 282.

[4] Gonzalez Suarez, *Los Aborigenes de Imbabura y del Carchi*, p. 63.

[5] Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p. 193.

[6] Reich and Stegelmann, "Bei den Indianern des Urubamba und des Envira," in *Globus*, Bd. LXXXIII., 1903, p. 136.

[7] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 479. Von Martius also states that the Muras used "die halbmondförmig verbundenen Klauen eines grossen Ameisenfressers" as an ornament for the neck (v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 410).

South America. The two points of the crescent-shaped object, be it made of tin, gold, or silver, may originally have represented the claws, or in other cases the tusks, of a wild animal, the points, which are directed outwards, acting as charms against evil influences. The supernatural efficacy ascribed to claws and teeth of wild animals subsists even in this simplified representation of them. We may, moreover, assume that the precious metals themselves are regarded as charms. These ornaments are therefore applied to delicate or exposed parts of the body which the savage is particularly anxious to protect.

Ornaments for the lips, and especially for the lower lip, are perhaps the most common face-ornaments in South America, and they are, as a rule, put on with the most solemn ceremonies. This is quite intelligible when we realize that from an uncivilized point of view the mouth is the most critical part of the face, the part through which man is most accessible to malign influences. Through the food and drink he consumes, through the air he is breathing, the Indian fancies evil spirits may obtain entrance into his body. Hence the precautions—first of all consisting of piercing the lips—which are usually taken shortly after birth, or in early childhood, to secure the child's mouth against the mysterious dangers.

Some instances may be adduced to illustrate this Indian view. Thus the true Carib and Ackawoi women in Guiana are wont to pierce one or more holes in their lower lips, through each of which they pass, point outward, a pin or sharpened piece of wood. " What the object of this may be," Sir Everard F. im Thurn says, " I do not know . . . but the effect is that the lips are protected by a dangerous-looking row of spikes. Similarly the men pierce one hole just under the middle of their lower lips, through which they pass the loop of string, fastening it inside the mouth, to which is attached a bell-shaped ornament which hangs down over the chin."[1] Again, the Carib women, whom Herr Joest describes, have one small hole in their lower lip in which they insert a sharp fish bone in such a way that the head of the bone prevents it from falling out.[2] This sharp fish bone may have served the same object as the " dangerous-looking row of spikes " mentioned by Sir E. F. im Thurn, namely, to keep off evil spirits.

---

[1] Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p. 193. Cp. also Schomburgk's statement on the Macusis in *Reisen in British-Guiana*, ii. 315.

[2] Joest, *Ethnographisches und Verwandtes aus Guiana* (*Intern. Archiv f. Ethnographie*, Bd. V. Supplement, Leyden, 1893), p. 82.

The ancient Tupis pierced the lower lip of their newborn children and inserted in the whole a polished bone, pointed at one end. The ornament stuck out about two inches from the chin. This bone was only worn in childhood; at a more advanced age it was replaced by a green stone. Some men were not contented with this stone in the chin, but wore a similar ornament in each cheek, which was perforated for this purpose.[1] The Botocudos, again, owe their name to the huge cylindriform wooden plugs (*botoques*) which they wear in the ear-lobes and the lower lip. When the child is about seven or eight years old, its ears and lip are pierced with a small thorn or wooden pin. In a short time a larger stick is inserted, and as the opening yields to pressure still larger sticks or plugs are used, until the desired size is attained. The plugs finally put in are made of the light wood of the barriguda tree, and are from two to five inches in diameter. Even the women are subjected to the wearing of these ornaments, which cause much pain and greatly distort the lip and the mouth.[2]

Smaller and less disfiguring lip-ornaments, metal or wooden buttons (*tembetas*), are worn by several tribes, of whom I have already mentioned the Chiriguanos and the Cainguá. Other Indian peoples who practise, or once practised, the same custom are the Abipones and the Chamacoco in Paraguay, and the Guarayús in Bolivia. The Abipones formerly used to pierce the lower lip with a hot iron or a sharp reed. Into the hole some inserted a reed and others a small tube of bone, glass, gum, or yellow brass. This was done with boys when they were seven years old, but never with women.[3] One of the elaborate decorative arrangements which the heathen Guarayús used to make for a religious feast was to put the *tembeta* or *beton* in the lower lip, which was perforated for this purpose.[4] The Chiriguanos are particularly famous for their *tembetas*, which are regarded as national badges or distinguishing tribal marks for the men. These lip buttons were originally made of wood in which pieces of a turquoise or chrysolite were inserted, sometimes also of transparent rosin. Nowadays they are mostly made of tin.[5] The Catholic missionary

---

[1] Lery, *Histoire d'un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil*, pp. 111, 112. *The Captivity of Hans Stade of Hesse* (Hakluyt Society), p. 138 *sq*.

[2] v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 319, 320. Wied-Neuwied, *Reise nach Brasilien*, ii. 5. Branner, *Notes on the Botocudos and their Ornaments*, pp. 2, 3 (Paper read before the American Philosophical Society, November 16, 1888).

[3] Dobrizhoffer, *op. cit.*, ii. 24.

[4] Cardús, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

[5] Del Campana, *Notizie intorno ai Ciriguani* (*Archivio per l'antropologia e la etnologia*, Firenze, 1902), pp. 79, 80. Nordenskiöld, *Indianerleben*, p. 211.

Cardús, discussing the *tembetas*, states that their original significance is obscure, but suggests that the use of these lip-ornaments is due to some old superstition.[1] That this is really so, will appear more clearly from the ceremonies with which the *tembeta* was put on, and which I shall presently recount. For the moment I shall mention some other facts which seem to point in the same direction. According to a myth of the Chiriguanos, the ornament was given them by the fox-god, *Aguaratunpa*, as a help in the struggle for existence. "I allow you," says the fox-god, "to beseech its assistance in any necessity, and I enjoin it to grant you everything you ask for."[2] This seems to indicate that it was originally a charm or amulet. Moreover, the missionary Del Campana states that, according to information given by some Chiriguanos, the *tembeta* is sometimes used as a sort of whistle. During an eclipse of the sun, for instance, the Indians take it off from the chin, and blowing in it produce a shrill sound which probably is supposed to frighten away the evil spirit that is preying upon the sun.[3] If this statement is correct, it is direct evidence that the *tembeta* is a charm, since whistles of different kinds are not seldom used by the Indians to conjure spirits.

The true character of such face-ornaments also appears from some of the ceremonies which mark their first employment. The perforation of the lip, the ear-lobe, or the nose usually takes place at an early age, and being, as it often is, connected with name-giving, it may well be compared with the baptism of more civilized peoples. Thus Dr. Ambrosetti says of the Cainguá: "A real baptism, which must be regarded as genuinely national, is the piercing of the lower lip of newborn male children in order that they may be able to wear a *tembeta*."[4] In fact, as the original object of the baptismal rites, both in pagan religions and in the early Christian Church, has been to purify the newborn child from evil spirits, so there is much the same idea connected with the ceremonial piercing of the lips, the ears, and the nose of newborn Indian children. The piercing of the lips, as already mentioned, is commonly celebrated by feasts and ceremonies. Of the ideas underlying the Indian bleeding-customs I shall give a detailed account in a special chapter. Here it is enough to state that by perforating a part of the body and drawing blood from it the Indian believes he will *purify that particular spot from evil spirits which are supposed to have mixed in the blood.* By such an operation, therefore, the delicate child, who is badly attacked by the supernatural foes, is believed to acquire a certain power of resistance against them. The very scar afterwards acts as a charm, and still more the ornament inserted later on, which consists of a thing charged with magical power. In this way we have to understand all the facial ornaments with which we are dealing, and the ceremonies with which the wearer is made to assume them.

---

[1] Cardús, *op. cit.*, p. 246.

[2] Del Campana, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

[3] Del Campana, *op. cit.*, p. 47. So I understand the statement of the Catholic missionary, which, however, is not quite clear.

[4] Ambrosetti, *Los indios Caingua del alto Paraná*, p. 83.

v. Martius describes the birth customs of the Marauhas in the following way: After the birth the mother bathes the child in warm water and puts herself in the hammock, dieting herself, together with her husband, for three weeks. When the mother gets up, the eldest relative gives the child a name, whereupon its lips are pierced, an event which is celebrated with feasts. Moreover, when the boy is ten or twelve years old, his father makes four incisions upon his mouth, after which he has to fast for five days.[1] Of the Maxurúnas the same writer states that the operation through which the ears and the lips of the child are perforated, is celebrated with a great feast; and likewise the perforation of the cheeks, which takes place at puberty. In order that the wounds may not close, small arrows are inserted in them, which are turned round every day until the wounds are cicatrized.[2] That these operations were due to superstitious ideas, may be inferred not only from the feasts accompanying them—although the details of these are not described—but also from the procedure with the arrow. Arrows, as we shall find, are commonly used by the Indians as charms, especially at bleeding-ceremonies, and the idea is that *the pointed instrument will kill or strike terror into the evil spirit in the blood,* against whom the whole operation is directed. If we have any doubt as to the correctness of this explanation in the case in question, we shall find it confirmed by an analogous rite of the Bororó, recorded by Professor von den Steinen. Among them, likewise, the lower lip of the child was pierced by the medicine-man shortly after the birth. But the most interesting thing in the whole operation was the instrument used. This instrument, called *baragára,* was an arrow-like ornamented stick, which had a pointed bone attached to the end by means of rosin. It was beautifully decked with red and orange-coloured feathers and fine white down arranged between them. The upper end ran out in a long blue macaw feather, and from the point where the latter was attached to the stick a bundle of hawk, parrot, and macaw feathers hung down. The *baragára*, we are told, was also used as a head-ornament on festive occasions. Moreover, the way in which the operation was carried out is significant. The medicine-man, dancing, chanting, and holding the *baragára* in the hand, proceeded several times alternately to and from the child, and during one of these turns perforated its lip.[1]

---

[1] v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 427.

[2] v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 431.

Knowing the important part feathers play as charms, we can have no doubt either as to the true nature of the fantastically ornamented instrument or as to the ceremony at which it was used. The mysterious dance performed at the perforation is further evidence that we are simply dealing with a magical conjuration where the pointed instrument, adorned with powerful feathers, served as a means to kill or intimidate the impure demon. The fact that the *baragára* was also used as a hair-ornament at feasts—most of which among the Bororó seem to have had the character of death-feasts—likewise shows that it was not an ordinary bleeding-lancet but an object of supernatural efficacy.

Among the Karayá both sexes wear, in the upper lip, reeds about 15 or 20 centimetres in length. For feasts they are replaced by round, many-coloured feather rosettes. Only men have the lower lip perforated, wearing in the hole plugs of the soft wood of the piuva tree. The piercing of the lips is accompanied by certain ceremonies. When the child is six or seven years old the girls have the upper lip, and boys both lips, pierced. The whole community is assembled for the occasion. In the middle of a large circle the child is sitting on a foot-stool, which is adorned with macaw feathers. One of the relatives pierces the ears with a thorn of the tucum palm, and the lips with the pointed bone of a monkey. The wound holes are held open by means of inserted cottons, which are often changed. After the operation the child has to fast for one day, and for some time further is allowed to take only liquid food.[2]

It is hardly necessary to point out that the macaw feathers with which the foot-stool was ornamented were no real "decorations," but played an effective part in the conjuration, which was the gist of the whole ceremony, just as the splinter of the tucum palm and the sharp monkey's bone were regarded as magical or "antiseptic" instruments for the operation. In fact, in such cases there is not a detail, however seemingly unimportant, which has not a special significance.

---

[1] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 475.

[2] Ehrenreich, *Beiträge zur Völkerkunde Brasiliens*, pp. 10, 29. v. Koenigswald, "Die Carajá-Indianer," in *Globus*, Bd. XCIV., No. 14, 1908, p. 219.

Again, among the ancient Tapujas, it was customary to pierce the upper lip and the cheeks before marriage. Both men and women prepared themselves for the ceremony by attaching flowers of different colours to the body with gum. Two sorcerers pierced the lips and cheeks of those to be married with a pointed wood splinter and inserted in each hole a sharp white stone. Subsequently, one of the sorcerers took his tobacco pipe, drew some puffs, and blew the smoke upon the marriage candidates, this being a "nuptial benediction."[1]

Marriage, as we have seen before, is one of those critical epochs in human life at which prophylactic ceremonies of various kinds are often considered necessary. The previous decoration with flowers, the perforation of the lip and cheeks, the insertion of the sharp stones, and, lastly, the fumigation with tobacco, were all different measures to purify the individuals concerned from harmful spirits.

As to the ceremony with which the *tembeta* of the Chiriguanos was inserted, it is stated that it was one of the most remarkable and most ancient the people possessed. It was a puberty ceremony with which the boy was received among the men; and the operation was performed by the medicine-man, the *ipaye.* Some time before, the boy was subjected to restricted diet. On the appointed day the medicine-man arrived ceremonially, and proceeded to carry out his function. The novice was stretched out on the ground without clothes. The *ipaye* at first delivered a speech giving him various instructions, after which he perforated his lower lip with a pointed deer's horn, inserting in the bleeding wound a small tube or piece of wood. The medicine-man now gave him some more instructions, among other things enjoining him to keep silence and to observe fasting. At a more advanced age, the tube or piece of wood was replaced by a real *tembeta,* and the larger this ornament was the greater the honour it was considered to be for the wearer.[2] All these details bear out the religious significance of the ceremony.

Equally solemn was the ceremony with which among the ancient

---

[1] Baro, *Relations véritables et curieuses du Brésil,* p. 240.

[2] Del Campana, *op. cit.,* p. 79. Corrado, *El colegio franciscano de Tarija,* p. 47, footnote. Nordenskiöld, *Indianerleben,* p. 211.

Incas the princes of the royal blood got their ear-lobes pierced in order to become chevaliers. Of all marks of honour which they received at this initiation the holes in the ear-lobes were the most important. The Inca himself pierced the ears of the young princes with big golden pins, which afterwards were left in the wounds in order to make the holes larger. To these holes, the size of which, according to Garcilasso de la Vega, was incredible, later on golden pendants or rings were attached.[1]

Although there is no direct evidence to show it, we have every reason to assume that this solemn perforation of the ears among the Incas was originally due to the same magical ideas as among the uncivilized Indians, and that the pendants were simply charms.

There is one detail in some of the above instances about which a few words of explanation may be added. We notice the frequent prescription that the novice shall fast or restrict his diet before or after the operation. That fasting, where it is ceremonial, is in most cases due to fear of evil spirits entering into the body with the food, has occasionally been pointed out before, and in this particular case the custom is based upon the same superstition. The reason is the same as that which induces a patient undergoing a medical cure to be careful in every way, and especially with his diet, as long as the cure goes on. The object of the above-mentioned piercing-ceremonies, as we have seen, is to purify the blood of the young Indian from impure demons and thus to enhance his power of resistance against them. Now if, before the cure is finished—that is, before the wound is healed and cicatrized—he eats some unsuitable food and again exposes himself to evil influences, he may frustrate the efficacy of the whole operation. Thus, the fasting on such occasions is fully in conformity with the religious character of the corresponding ceremonies.

Lastly, it is important to note that among the Indians, as among other savage peoples, such operations are mostly carried out by the sorcerer or medicine-man. It is true that the significance of this fact has been denied by some writers. It has been argued that the fact that tattooings, circumcisions, and similar operations are performed by priests or sorcerers is not necessarily an evidence that these ceremonies are of a religious nature, since the priests are generally the physicians of savage tribes. It may be as a physician and not as a priest that the medicine-man operates, for instance, when he perforates the lips and the ear-lobes of the Indian child.[1] This remark depends on a common erroneous idea about the savage sorcerers or priests, namely, that they combine two different functions in one person. Sometimes they are real physicians who cure diseases by " natural " remedies; sometimes, again, they are sorcerers who have recourse to magical conjurations and other superstitious practices.[2] The more we familiarize ourselves with the primitive mode of thought, the more clearly we realize that this distinction does not exist to the savage himself. The Indian medicine-man is hardly ever a " physician " in the modern sense of the word, he is always a sorcerer. The savage has only *one* theory of diseases—namely, that they are caused by evil spirits—and only *one* way of curing them—namely, by magical means.[3] Even when a white man cures an Indian by his medicines, this medicine is to the Indian mind a magical antidote against the evil demon; and when in his own medical art he uses, for example, herbs and drugs which to the civilized onlooker seem as natural remedies, and perhaps really act as such, they are, in fact, by the savage sorcerer regarded as possessing some mysterious supernatural virtues. Considering this, we may safely say that in all cases where sorcerers or medicine-men perform such operations as those mentioned above, these ceremonies have a religious or magical significance, even were there no other evidence for it. Sometimes the operation is not performed by the professional medicine-man, but by the chief of the community, who usually is more or less initiated in the magic art.

---

[1] Garcilasso de la Vega, *Comentarios reales*, bk. vi., c. 23.

---

[1] See, for instance, Joest, *Ethnographisches und Verwandtes aus Guyana* (*Intern. Archiv f. Ethnographie*, Bd. V. Supplement, Leyden, 1893), p. 91. *Idem*, *Tätowiren*, pp. 27, 61. Westermarck, *History of Human Marriage* (1901), p. 204.

[2] Thus, Dr. Nordenskiöld in his *De sydamerikanska indianernas kulturhistoria*, has a chapter about " the real medical art of the Indians," meaning by this expression the medical art " which has little or nothing to do with magic " (p. 132). But such a medical science hardly exists at all to the Indian, except, perhaps, in some purely surgical cases. It may be that the Indian who cuts himself with his knife does not directly ascribe this to an evil spirit. But if the wound does not presently heal, but shows signs of infection, it is immediately clear to him that an evil spirit has invaded the limb. In Chaco I frequently witnessed magical conjurations to heal wounds, in which the principal thing was to kill or expel the demon. Another medical practice which likewise always seems to have a purely religious character is the *bleeding*. See *infra*, Chapter VI., p. 186 *sqq*.

[3] It is a well-known fact that sickness is commonly, by the Indians, ascribed to witchcraft through an evil sorcerer. But even witchcraft is, according to Indian belief, carried out by the aid of a demon.

Collars and necklaces, bracelets, armlets, anklets, and rattles of different kinds belong to the most ordinary means of personal decoration in South America, and it is not possible to give a detailed description or classification of them here. In the following pages I only propose to point out the leading principles of such ornaments, and to show that they are in the main the same as those underlying the ear-, lip-, and nose-ornaments just dealt with.

The Indians of the Gran Chaco use various kinds of necklaces, and it seems to be the rule that among the most primitive tribes they are more worn by men than by women; among the more civilized, on the other hand, more by women than by men. Among the Chorotis and Ashluslays, for instance, these necklaces are partly made of beads received from the whites, partly of snails' shells, which are elaborately fashioned into small round buttons with a hole drilled in the centre and closely strung together. The latter necklaces are among the most valued and expensive property of these Indians and are usually very large, covering almost the whole neck and breast. The Indians seldom take these ornaments off, and especially for feasts and dances they are indispensable. The Chorotis, no doubt, gave me the true explanation of their original significance when they expressly told me that *the necklaces are protections against diseases and other evils.* The evil spirits, according to the idea of the Chorotis, preferably attach themselves to the throat and the chest, probably because catarrhs in these parts of the body are of frequent occurrence among the Chaco Indians during the dry season. The spirits are believed to enter the body directly through the throat or the breast, but this is prevented by the protecting necklaces. Hence, when a Choroti Indian sells his necklace or leaves it off, his comrades say that he most certainly will soon fall ill. The same belief I found prevailing among the Mataco-Nocténes, among whom both men and women wear similar neck-ornaments. Thus the son of a chief, who was just in the age of puberty, one day appeared painted red in the face with *urucú*, and with a necklace covering the neck and breast. When I asked the father why his son had put on these things, he answered: "It is in order that he may not fall ill." When such importance is attached to personal ornaments, it is easy to understand the statement that among the Argentine Matacos children of both sexes go totally naked up to the age of ten or twelve years, but nearly always wear collars and facial paintings.[1] Among the

---

[1] Baldrich, *Las comarcas virgenes*, p. 233.

Tobas only women wear necklaces and bracelets made of beads and snails' shells. If one asks a Toba girl why she wears such ornaments, she will in most cases answer, not that it is beautiful, but that it is *noin*—*i.e.*, "good"—an expression which the Indian generally uses of charms which afford a protection against evil influences, as well as of magical and religious ceremonies.

Now these ideas are certainly not confined to the Chaco Indians. Among many other South American tribes neck-ornaments are used under circumstances which suggest that they are not regarded as embellishments, but as magical protections. Thus, when Professor von den Steinen states that among the Bakaïri of the Rio Xingú children and pregnant women—*i.e.*, persons who particularly need to be guarded against malignant influences—are richly decorated with collars of beads, teeth, bones, and so on,[1] we easily recognize the superstitious motives for this decoration. The same may be said of the decorative outfit of the Suyá women, who only wear collars round the neck and big stripes of twisted palm leaves in the ear-lobes, but for the rest go entirely naked.[2] Among the Indians in north-west Brazil Dr. Koch-Grünberg frequently found that the most beautiful necklaces were worn by small children,[3] and he states that the parents were constantly showing their idolatrous love of their offspring by richly adorning them with neck-ornaments of seeds, snails' shells, teeth of the jaguar, the bush-hog, etc.[4] These ornaments were nothing but amulets which, by virtue of some inherent magical power, were believed to keep off evil influences from the delicate children. This superstitious intention is also suggested by von Martius with regard to the Manaos, when he says that the mothers, anxiously concerned for the welfare of their little ones, received from the sorcerers amulets consisting of pieces of wood and of the claws and feathers of some magical birds, which they hung round their necks.[5]

Among the ancient Tupis, when a son was born, it was customary to make him an *itamongaué*—*i.e.*, a ceremonial offering of good presage, consisting of the claws of a jaguar and the pounces of a big eagle-like bird, called *ourahouaboub*, together with the plumes of its wings or its tail. A small bow with arrows was also presented to the newborn son, everything being suspended at his bed. These presents were believed to make the future man virtuous and brave, since the tiger is the most powerful of the beasts and the *ourahouaboub* the most feared of the birds.[1] The magical power ascribed to the teeth and claws of ferocious animals and the pounces of birds of prey will presently be illustrated with some more instances. Likewise it is clear that the small bow and the arrows presented to the newborn child were simply charms to protect him against supernatural enemies.

---

[1] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

[2] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 193.

[3] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 122, 304; ii. 149, etc.

[4] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 122. Dr. Max Schmidt states the same with regard to the Paressi-Kabiji in southern Brazil. He found that small children were "in überreichem Masse mit Glasperlen behängt." Schmidt, "Reisen in Matto Grosso im Jahre 1910," in *Zeitsch. f. Ethnologie*, Bd. XLIV., 1912, p. 166.

[5] v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 586.

Necklaces, armlets, and bracelets of seeds, beads, snails' and beetles' shells, stones, bones, etc., are extremely common in all parts of South America, and it is needless to quote many instances to illustrate this custom. Even the primitive natives in the extreme South of the continent, notwithstanding the poverty which is characteristic of their material culture in other respects, display a remarkable love of ornaments. Thus the Jahgans not only apply paintings of different kinds to the body, but also wear feathers, collars of small sea shells, bracelets of seal skin, knots of the nerves of the guanaco, etc., as ornaments.[2] It is impossible to assign, in each case, to what is due the magical efficacy, which the Indians no doubt ascribe to such ornaments. That, for instance, the power ascribed to snails' and beetles' shells originally is due to the spirits which are believed to animate even such creatures, can only be put forward as an hypothesis, although it is supported by analogous instances. The magical virtue ascribed to certain seeds most probably depends on an animistic belief. The spirit which is supposed to animate the plant, and to bring forth the fruits, is particularly concentrated in the seeds. In Chaco, the Indians usually fill their magical rattle-gourds with the hard seeds of the tusca (*Acacia aroma*), which produce a dull sound when the instrument is shaken. The tusca is, on account of its edible fruit, one of the most important trees in Chaco, and, as a matter of fact, is supposed to be animated by a spirit. We may therefore infer that the use of its seeds for magical purposes is not accidental but connected with that belief.

This explanation gains support by a statement relating to the magical rattle-gourds of the Apapocúva-Guaranis in southern Brazil. These natives fill their gourds with small black fruits called *ymaú*, which are looked upon as sacred and religiously guarded. The efficacy of the rattles is said particularly to lie in the sound which is produced by these fruits when the instrument is shaken. Moreover, the Apapocúvas also string the *ymaú* fruits into a sort of magical necklace which in their language is called *jiaçaá*. The necklace, the file of which consists of tucum fibres, is also covered with powerful *potý* feathers. These necklaces, together with armlets made of the same sacred fruit, diadems adorned with feathers, dancing-staffs, rattle-gourds, and red *urucú*-painting, form the magical equipment of the medicine-men.[1] To what the supernatural virtue of the *ymaú* fruit is due is not stated, but there is little doubt that it is believed to contain a spirit, or spiritual power, as is the case with the tusca seeds in Chaco.

---

[1] Thevet, *Cosmographie universelle*, ii. 915.

[2] Bove, *Patagonia, Terra del Fuoco*, p. 129. Hyades and Deniker, *Mission scientifique de Cap Horn*, tome vii. (*Anthropologie, Ethnographie*), p. 349.

As to stones, the Indians commonly ascribe wonderful magical properties to small precious and rare stones, and consequently willingly wear them as ornaments. The most interesting example of this we have in the green "stones of the Amazons" known from the northern parts of South America. According to an old Indian myth, they originally came from "the land of the women," but their natural primary home is said to have been the region round the sources of the Orinoco, whence they gradually passed to other parts through the native commerce. Indian superstition, we are told, attached great importance to these green stones. They were worn as amulets round the neck, for, according to a popular belief, they protected a person against nervous disorders, fevers, and the bites of poisonous snakes.[2] A similar prophylactic power has no doubt been ascribed to the coloured stones which certain Indians, as the Tupis and the Chiriguanos, have been in the habit of inserting in the lips, cheeks, and ear-lobes. With regard to the origin of their supernatural power, it is interesting to note that, for instance, the Tlascaltecs in Central America supposed that the souls of people of rank after death entered not only into the bodies of certain higher animals, but also into *gems*.[3] That this idea should be held of rare stones which through their strange colour or their other properties strike the imagination of the savage, is not difficult to understand. But the theory that the magical virtues which Indian superstition commonly ascribes to stones of peculiar colour or shape are due to the presence of a spirit, or spiritual power, in them, can at present only be set forth as an hypothesis. This question will be treated of with more detail in a subsequent chapter, in connection with the animistic beliefs of the Indians.

---

[1] Nimuendajú-Unkel, *Religion der Apapocúva-Guarani* (*Zeitsch. f. Ethnologie*, 1914, Heft II., u. iii.), pp. 341, 343, 344.

[2] v. Humboldt, *Reise in die Aequinoctial-Gegenden des neuen Continents*, iii. 392-393. v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 731 *sq.* Roth, *op. cit.*, p. 290 *sq.*

[3] Clavigero, *Storia antigua del Messico*, ii. 5.

Again, in other cases the reason why certain neck-ornaments have been regarded as charms is more obvious. Thus the Choroti men are wont to wear a sort of flat wooden whistle, decorated with certain figures, round the neck. These whistles are worn especially at dances, and they are professedly charms; the shrill sound which the Indians are able to produce with them, and which is supposed to imitate the sound of the evil *mohsek*, has the power to frighten away or conjure these spirits. This being the case, it is easy to understand that the whistles themselves have come to be regarded as amulets, their efficacy being enhanced by the carved figures. Similar lockets are used by the Lenguas in Paraguay;[1] and although it is not expressly stated we may assume that they are worn for the same purpose as among the Chorotis.

The Caribs of the Antilles made whistles of the bones of their killed enemies and wore them round the neck as ornaments.[2] These whistles were, no doubt, believed to contain the spirits of the enemies, and were accordingly credited with magical energy. The same principle is plainly brought out in the practice of the Roocooyen in Guiana. These Indians, who take great care of the bodies of their dead relatives, among other things decorate them with a small flute of bone, which is hung round the neck. The flute is evidently put on for the same purpose as the many-coloured feathers and the crown of crocodile mail, with which the body is also decorated.[3] The idea is to protect the remains of the deceased against the evil spirits which cause decomposition.[4]

Equally obvious is the magical character of the neck and breast ornaments in the numerous cases where they consist of the tusks or teeth and claws of wild animals, or of the teeth of slain human enemies.

To a primitive mind the idea is quite natural that the strength of a ferocious beast is especially concentrated in its teeth and claws with which it tears its victim into pieces. In fact, what has been said before about the human hair and nails holds true also of the claws and teeth of animals; in these parts of the body, according to the Indian idea, the soul or spirit of the animal is present in the most real sense of the word. Even human teeth have, for the same reason, sometimes been objects of superstitious practices. The custom of knocking out teeth at puberty, in mourning, or on other occasions, which is known from several savage peoples, has been very little practised in South America. Yet Cieza de León and Garcilasso de la Vega mention that the Huancavilcas in Peru used to pull out two or three teeth both in the upper and in the lower jaw of all their children. Garcilasso's statement, that this custom was instituted by the Inca Tupac Yupanqui as a punishment for the treason of a Huancavilca chief,[1] of course, is wholly without significance, and only refers to a tradition invented later on to explain the practice. Cieza de León's account is more suggestive on this point. He says that they pulled out three teeth in each jaw, and that the operation was performed by the father while the son was of quite tender age; "and they thought that in doing this they committed no wicked thing, but, on the contrary, believed it to be a benefaction, and very pleasing to their gods."[2] For my own part, I believe that this mutilation of the teeth, which as we find had the character of an initiation and was thought to benefit the child, was undertaken exactly for the same reason as the cutting of the hair-lock and the nails of young children among the Incas. The soul of the child was supposed to be seated in the hair-lock and the nails; hence, when these were guarded, the soul of the little offspring was likewise guarded against mysterious dangers.[3] Similarly, the Huancavilcas may have pulled out and kept the teeth of their children in order to keep their souls secure in some place outside of them. The South American Indians are, at any rate, quite familiar with this idea. We also meet it in the practice of hiding the *name* of small children and grown-up people, a practice which I shall have occasion to mention again later on. A man's soul is supposed to be in his name, just as it is present in his hair, his nails, and his teeth.

---

[1] Grubb, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

[2] de Rochefort, *Histoire naturelle et morale des Iles Antilles*, p. 445.

[3] Crevaux, *Voyages dans l'Amérique du Sud*, p. 238.

[4] See *supra*, p. 36.

The same idea, in my opinion, explains the use of human teeth as real ornaments, which are worn round the neck or on the breast. Thus, the Tupis had the teeth of their slain enemies strung into necklaces, more than two yards in length, which were wound round the neck; and they challenged their enemies, showing them ostentatiously these teeth and the bones of the captives they had killed and eaten.[1] The ancient Peruvians, when they adorned themselves for a battle, among other things put on necklaces made of the teeth of the enemies they had killed in war.[2] Similarly, the ancient Indians in Paraguay not only used collars and pendants of small stones and animals' teeth, but also of the teeth of captives taken in war and afterwards killed. It was the business of some old female sorcerers to extract the teeth and string them into necklaces. These ornaments were estimated " more than gold and silver."[3] In all these cases we are dealing with trophies which, containing the spirits of the enemies, are supposed to possess a mysterious power. In fact, the teeth of slain human enemies, worn as a decoration, may be referred to the same class of magical ornaments as the head-trophies and the scalps, which are so highly valued by the Indians on account of the wonderful benefits they confer upon their wearer.

---

[1] Garcilasso de la Vega, *op. cit.*, bk. ix., c. 3.

[2] Cieza de León, *La cronica del Perú* (Primera parte), c. 49.

[3] See *supra*, p. 51.

The same holds true of the neck and breast ornaments that consist in teeth and claws of wild animals. In order fully to understand the ideas connected with such ornaments it is necessary to call to mind what has been said before about the Indian doctrine of reincarnation or metempsychosis. Whether the South American Indians have any idea at all of an animal soul or spirit as distinct from a human soul, is a question which it would be out of place to discuss here. It is sufficient to state that at any rate in numerous cases the spirit which animates an animal is regarded as a transmigrated human soul, and that such animals—be they beasts, or birds, or reptiles—play the most important part in the superstition of the Indians. Their claws, teeth, feathers, skins, etc., are regarded as the most powerful charms against evils of every kind, and are with predilection worn as decorations.

Von Martius, speaking of the great authority the medicine-man exercises among the Manaos and some other tribes in north-west Brazil, says that mothers, who are anxious to protect their offspring, receive from him amulets consisting of the feathers and claws of the magical birds caracara (*Polyborus vulgaris*), curajeu (*Caprimulgus*), and sasy (*Coracina ornata*), "of which the Gayatacaces believed that it receives the souls of the departed."[1] Von Martius seems to connect the idea that "it receives the souls of the departed" only with the last-mentioned bird, the sasy; but the same belief was certainly held of the caracara and the curajeu as well. In fact, this is probably the true reason why certain birds are regarded as "magical" and looked upon with superstitious awe.

---

[1] Lery, *op. cit.*, pp. 230, 247, etc.

[2] Cobo, *Historia del nuevo mundo*, iv. 161.

[3] Guevara, *Historia del Paraguay*, i. 29, 30. These Indians probably belonged to the Guaycurú-group.

Von Spix and von Martius relate of some other Indian tribes on the Amazons that they wear pendants of jaguars' and monkeys' teeth, or of certain roots, fruits, shells, and stones, round the neck, "believing that these are able to protect them against the attacks of wild animals and against diseases." At the same time we are informed that they believe in an evil principle who meets them now as a lizard, now as a man with deer's feet, now as a crocodile or a jaguar, who leads them astray, troubles and harms them.[2] Knowing the Indian doctrine of metempsychosis, we may assume that the evil principle who meets the red man in these different shapes is nothing but a reincarnated human spirit. It is, moreover, quite in accordance with the principles of magic that, for instance, the teeth of a jaguar or a crocodile are regarded as the most powerful charms against spirits that have incarnated themselves in these ferocious beasts. There is a similar instance with regard to the Bororó of the Rio Xingú. Professor von den Steinen relates that when a jaguar has been killed a great feast is held, at which *the teeth and the fell of the animal are given to the nearest relative of the Indian man or woman who has died last.*[3] The explanation of this practice seems to be as follows: the dead Indian is supposed to have possibly reincarnated himself in a tiger—a very common belief in South America—and the nearest relative, who is most endangered by the dead, receives these parts of the beast killed as a protection against the malignant spirit. As the spirit of the animal is particularly seated in its teeth and fell, a person who is in possession of these is supposed to possess some very efficacious charms to control it and to keep it off.

As I propose to show in detail in a special chapter, the Indian doctrine of metempsychosis especially applies to big and ferocious animals, such as the tiger, the crocodile, the boar, and so forth. This fact, it seems to me, in great degree explains the predominant rôle that the teeth, claws, and skins of such animals play as amulets among many South American tribes. These essential parts are particularly charged with magical energy, and therefore afford a good protection both against these wild beasts and against other evils, at the same time as they impart their courage and ferocity to the wearer. Among the Xingú tribes, for instance, jaguars' teeth were mostly used as breast-ornaments, two teeth being generally combined so as to form a crescent. Professor von den Steinen says that the Indians connected with this ornament the idea that it makes the wearer strong and swift.[1] Monkeys' teeth, and teeth obtained from Brazilian captives, were used in the same way. Tusks of jaguars were made into head-ornaments.[2] Among the tribes of the Uaupés the warriors decorated themselves with trophies obtained from slain enemies, especially with their teeth, which were strung into necklaces, or with the teeth of jaguars, the claws of the giant ant-eater, or the beaks of great birds of prey.[3] The French traveller Coudreau, speaking of the same Indians, expressly states that "collars made of jaguars' and bush-hogs' teeth, worn round the neck by small children, are amulets intended to protect them, when they grow bigger, against the attacks of ferocious beasts."[4] Jaguars' teeth are likewise, or were formerly, worn as ornaments, for instance, by the Jibaros in Ecuador, by the Coroados of the Rio Xipoto,[5] by the tribes of the Rio Negro,[6] and by the Caribs of the Antilles.[7] To the magical apparatus of a Siusi medicine-man belonged, among other things, a necklace with two prodigious teeth of the great crocodile. Dr. Koch-Grünberg rightly observes that "many South American tribes ascribe certain magical virtues to such teeth."[8] This was, no doubt, also the reason why the Caraipuna warrior, when he prepared himself for a battle, put crocodile teeth in the ear-lobes instead of ear-rings.[9] The Bororó, as I have mentioned before, wear the claws of the big ant-eater, combined so as to form a half-moon, as a breast-ornament.[10]

---

[1] v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 586.

[2] v. Spix and v. Martius, *Reise in Brasilien*, i. 379.

[3] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 491.

---

[1] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 479.

[2] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 479.

[3] v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 596.

[4] Coudreau, *La France équinoxiale*, ii. 171.

[5] v. Spix and v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 368.

[6] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 304.

[7] Rochefort, *op. cit.*, p. 445.

[8] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 67. Cp. also Gumilla, *Historia natural de las naciones del Rio Orinoco*, ii. 260.

[9] Church, *Aborigines of South America*, p. 131.

[10] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 479. See *supra*, p. 107.

Similar ornaments, composed of the claws of the ant-eater, are used for instance, by the Mundrucús[1] and the Muras.[2] Monkeys' teeth are likewise largely made into necklaces, a practice which probably is connected with the fact that the monkey, owing to its human-like shape, is often regarded as the reincarnation of a human spirit. Thus, the Chacobo men wear large trophy-like necklaces, composed of about one thousand five hundred fore-teeth of a special kind of monkey, and these, moreover, are decorated with red toucan feathers. Even the women wear at feasts such necklaces of monkeys' teeth, although much smaller and simpler.[3] Ornaments of monkeys' teeth for the neck, breast, or waist are known from various other tribes in South America, being worn both by men and by women.[4]

Sir Everard F. im Thurn, speaking generally of the Indians of British Guiana, says that there are two ornaments which are worn by men of all tribes more than any others. These are a necklace of bush-hogs' teeth and a pair of armlets consisting in a band of cotton or beads. The necklace is possessed by every adult Indian, and is almost constantly worn everywhere but in the house. "The even row of teeth, whiter than ivory and filed to uniformity, as it hangs against the chest of the Indian, contrasting with his dark red skin, is really a beautiful ornament; but the special value which the Indian attributes to it is not because of its beauty, but because, as each Indian is supposed to wear only the teeth of such bush-hogs as he has himself killed, the more numerous, the finer, and the larger the teeth are, the more successful do they show their Indian owner to have been in hunting."[5] The statement seems to give some support to the current theory that the teeth of animals, as also the feathers of birds, worn as decorations, are simply trophies of chase, proudly shown off by successful hunters. But it is easily intelligible that the magical character of such ornaments has escaped Sir Everard F. im Thurn, as it has escaped so many other travellers among the South American Indians. The theory of primitive magic has on the whole been little known up to recent times. The writer states that, in

---

[1] v. Spix and v. Martius, *op. cit.*, ii. 1072.

[2] v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 410.

[3] Nordenskiöld, *Indianer och hvita*, pp. 104, 105.

[4] See, for instance, Gumilla, *op. cit.*, i. 125. Church, *op. cit.*, p. 141. v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 478. v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 410. v. Spix and v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 368; ii. 1072. Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 122, 288, etc.

[5] Im Thurn, *op. cit.*, p. 196 *sq.*

Guiana, women "very seldom" decorate themselves with animals' teeth, except those of the acourie.[1] Several facts from other parts of South America could be adduced which confirm that there really are exceptions to the rule, and that teeth of animals are sometimes worn by women under circumstances which cannot be accounted for by the trophy-theory. Thus, for instance, among the Tupis, as among most South American tribes, the puberty of a girl was celebrated with various ceremonies; her hair was cut off, her back scarified, and a necklace of the teeth of some wild animals was given her, which necklace she was obliged to wear until the hair had grown long again.[2] The same custom has prevailed among the Caribs of Guyana; one of the elaborate measures taken with the girl at puberty was to hang the teeth of a wild beast round her neck.[3] In these cases the magical significance of the teeth ornaments is obvious. The object of such puberty ceremonies is to secure the young girl against the evil spirits, to whose attacks she is believed to be exposed, and the decoration with the teeth necklaces, which were nothing but amulets, among the Tupis and the Caribs formed part and parcel of these ceremonies.

Various rattle-ornaments for the waist, the legs, or the arms, consisting in teeth, gourds, mussel shells, etc., are also commonly worn by the Indians. The magical character of these ornaments is, as a rule, more conspicuous in that they are in most cases directly connected with religious ceremonies.

In Chaco, for instance, the Mataco sorcerer, when he beats the drum, wears round the waist a leather cincture from which various rattles of mussel shells, tin disks, small horns and bones, or other things hang down. During the chant he is constantly moving the body up and down and from one side to the other in order that the rattles may sound. The dull noise, accompanied by the chanting and the beating of the drum is supposed to act irresistibly upon the evil spirits, the *aittáh* or *nahút*. A similar rattle-instrument (*tahús*) is used by the sorcerer when disease-demons are exorcised, the rattle being repeatedly shaken over the patient's body.[4] Among the Tobas it was formerly customary that a young man, when he courted a girl, had to sing and beat a drum outside her hut for some eight successive days. On this occasion he had round the waist a cincture composed of the bones of the wild animals he had killed in hunting. During the "serenade" he incessantly moved the body from one side to the other so as to make the teeth rattle.[1] Now this rattle-cincture was certainly not worn merely to show off the courter's skill and courage to his would-be wife and her parents. Courting, as we have seen before, has also its religious aspect; in order to promote this important business, evil spirits must be kept at a distance from the man himself, and especially from the girl addressed. This was the main object of the chanting and drumming, and the rattling bones aided in the conjuration.

---

[1] Im Thurn, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

[2] Ternaux, *Voyages, relations et mémoires de l'Amérique*, iii. 277. Southey, *History of Brazil*, i. 240.

[3] Lafitau, *Mœurs des sauvages Amériquains*, i. 291.

[4] Karsten, *La religion de los indios Mataco-Noctenes* (*Anales del Museo Nacional de historia natural de Buenos Aires*, 1913, tomo xxiv.), p. 205. Cardús, *op. cit.*, p. 252.

Among the Patagonians, during a feast held in honour of a girl at the attainment of puberty, the sorcerers performed a dance at which they not only appeared painted and adorned with ostrich plumes, but also with "a girdle of bells extending from the shoulders to the hip, which jingled in tune to their steps."[2] Here evidently the "girdle of bells" was a magical instrument to conjure the spirits against whom the ceremony was directed. The same ideas appear, for instance, in the narrow belt of cords with a tassel of feathers or tapirs' hoofs at one side which is worn by the Jamamadi men,[3] or in the beautiful girdle adorned with teeth of the jaguar or the bush-hog, which the Tuyúka and Tukáno in north-west Brazil wear on the loins during some of their dances.[4]

With a similar view, no doubt, the Guaycurús in Paraguay, who distinguished themselves through their strange face-ornaments, head-dresses, and paintings, also wore ornaments of glass beads, mussel shells, and metal disks hung at the cincture, the rattle of which was heard at a long distance.[5]

Rattles round the ankles or the arms are also commonly used in South America. Thus the Tupis at their feasts wore, in addition to their magnificent feather ornaments, anklets of small dry fruits, which made a noise as if they had been of metal.[6] The Chanés on the

---

[1] Cardús, *op. cit.*, p. 264.

[2] Musters, *At Home with the Patagonians*, p. 81.

[3] Church, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

[4] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 287.

[5] Charlevoix, *Historia del Paraguay*, i. 136.

[6] Lery, *op. cit.*, p. 117. Cp. also Baro, *op. cit.*, p. 305. Murr, *Reisen einiger Missionarien in Amerika*, p. 281. v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i., p. 513.

Rio Parapiti formerly wore at their dances rattle-leglets of fruits, together with masks and grand ornaments of ostrich or parrot feathers.[1] The Siusi, the Tukáno, and other tribes in north-west Brazil use similar rattles, which are sometimes held in the hand during the dance, sometimes fastened to the ankles.[2] Among the Káua of the upper Rio Aiarý, even small children wore rattles of hollow nuts and palm fruits round the ankles,[3] a measure which appears intelligible when we consider the anxious care with which Indian parents try to protect in every way their delicate children against evil supernatural influences.

A significant instance illustrating the same Indian idea is mentioned by Sr. Boggiani in relation to the Chamacoco. A young man had met an accidental death and was brought to his mother, who at the sight of her son fell into convulsions and nearly seemed to lose her reason with sorrow. Suddenly she arose from the body and started to dance and chant round it, having previously tied bracelets of deer's and bucks' hoofs round the wrists and ankles, and these, with the movements of the body, made a loud noise.[4] It is clear that this dance, accompanied by the chant and the sound of the rattles, was no empty expression of sorrow, but had a practical aim; it may have been a desperate attempt on the part of the loving mother to revive the dead body of her offspring, by exorcising the evil spirit which had taken possession of it and caused the catastrophe.

Many similar facts could be adduced from different parts of South America, but it is hardly necessary to deal with these rattle-ornaments at length, since their real nature hardly admits of any doubt. They are invariably means of conjuration, forming a part of the often elaborate magical apparatus, which the Indian puts on when he deals with spiritual powers. The hollow sound produced by the rattles during the movements of the body is supposed to possess a mysterious efficacy, especially when these rattles consist of such magical things as the teeth of jaguars and other wild animals.

Most of the ornaments treated of in this chapter, as we have seen, are worn by both sexes, although in different proportions in different parts of South America. It is difficult to lay down any definite rules in this respect. Thus, for instance, among the Chorotis and Lenguas in Chaco the wooden plugs are worn chiefly by the men, seldom by the women, and among the Tobas, I think, only by the men.[1] Again, among the Abipones almost all married women had ear-rings, whereas only few of the men wore such. Among the Brazilian tribes, as we have seen, ear-, nose-, and lip-ornaments are commonly met with, the ear-ornaments being on the whole more worn by the women, the lip-ornaments more by the men. Yet, for instance, among the Botocudos and the Miranhas both sexes alike adorn themselves with plugs inserted in the ear-lobes, in the nose, or in the lips; and of the latter Indians it is even stated that the women carry the distortion of the lips farther than the men. In the northern parts of South America, as in Venezuela and in Guiana, the custom of piercing the lips, and the insertion of ornaments of one kind or another, seems to be practised by the women. On the other hand, the *tembeta* of the Chiriguanos, and of other tribes belonging to the great Guarani-group in Paraguay and Bolivia, has been regarded as a tribal mark distinguishing the men or the nobility, and therefore is not worn by the female sex.

---

[1] Nordenskiöld, *Indianerleben*, p. 239 *sq.*

[2] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 295.

[3] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 124.

[4] Boggiani, *Notizie etnografiche sulla tribu del Ciamacoco* (*Atti della Societá Romana di antropologia*, Roma, vol. ii., fasc. i.), p. 77.

That the use of a certain ornament among a certain tribe has been restricted to one sex, sometimes the male, sometimes the female, probably is only due to accidental causes. A certain fashion, say to wear a *tembeta*, has at first been invented, for instance, by a mighty chief, being a charm to protect him as a particularly exposed member of the community. The fashion has soon been adopted by his sons and been regarded as a mark distinguishing the male members of the chief's family. By-and-by it has been extended to his other male relatives, as well as to successful warriors and influential men in the community who have regarded themselves as a sort of nobility. So it was with the ear-rings of the Incas, and probably this is also the history of the Chiriguano *tembeta*. But where an ear-ring or a lip-button has thus from the beginning been stamped as an ornament particularly for men, denoting their courage or other virile virtues, it cannot, of course, be worn by women. On the other hand, where a certain face-ornament has been introduced by some influential women and adopted as a tribal mark for the female members of a community, it has naturally been regarded as improper to wear for a man.

---

[1] In our days only the Toba-Pilagás in Argentine wear wooden plugs in the ear-lobes. The Bolivian Tobas, among whom I have lived myself, have already dropped this custom.

Necklaces and bracelets are worn in about equal degree by men and women. Yet, on the whole, the men seem to drop these ornaments at somewhat higher stages of culture, whereas women always show a special liking for them.

Teeth of animals, being regarded as "trophies" of chase and as protective charms for the battle, are naturally more commonly worn by men than by women. However, even the latter are often—for instance, at the first menstruation, as among the Tupis and the Caribs—adorned with teeth of wild animals, and in such cases the practice clearly has a magical aim.

Real rattle ornaments, of whatever material they be made, are among most Indian tribes confined to the men. This is quite intelligible when we consider the nature of these magical objects. Whereas the face-ornaments, as well as the ordinary necklaces, bracelets, etc., are essentially preventive in their action, keeping off evil influences from the wearer, and effective without any co-operation on his or her part, the rattle ornaments are active means of conjuration, and as such used chiefly by persons who themselves are conjurers. But magical conjurations and exorcisms are not for women; as they do not, as a rule, take part in religious ceremonies, so they do not handle religious and magical instruments.[1] This point of view—which, as we found, also partly explains why women very seldom decorate themselves with feathers—is not without importance with regard to the question why the "love of ornaments," on the whole, seems to be less marked among the women than among the men in savage Indian societies.

---

[1] Just as there are exceptions to the rule that women shall not take part in religious ceremonies, so there are exceptions to the rule that they may not wear rattles and other magical instruments. Thus, among the Jibaros, when the women join the men in the dance performed round the head of a slain enemy, they wear heavy rattling cinctures, made of snails' shells, round the waist These rattles are never worn by the men.

CHAPTER V

OTHER PERSONAL ORNAMENTS. THE COVERING OF THE BODY AND THE "SENSE OF SHAME"

IN addition to the detached ornaments dealt with in the last chapter, many South American Indians wear certain fixed ornaments consisting of bands, bindlets, girdles, etc., for the arms, the legs, the head, and the waist, some of which form a transition to real clothes. They begin to be used, as a rule, at an early age and with certain ceremonies, and when once put on are seldom or never removed. This kind of ornament is met with in many parts of South America, and is more commonly worn by women than by men.

Among the true Caribs, for instance, young female children have a two-inches-broad belt of cotton knitted round each ankle, and just below each knee. This band is never throughout life removed, or if removed is immediately replaced. "The consequence is," says Sir Everard F. im Thurn, "that the muscles of the calf swell out to a very abnormal degree between these bands, while those parts of the leg which are actually constricted remain hardly thicker than the actual bone." The arms are occasionally treated in the same way.[1] Joest, speaking of the same Indians, adds that the bands are richly smeared with *urucú* and, moreover, adorned with tassels of cotton.[2] Of the other Guiana tribes the Macusi and the Arecuna women have one such constriction above each ankle, but not the second below the knee. Both men and women among all these Indians generally wear a piece of string or a band of cotton or beads round their ankles and round their arms, just below the shoulders.[3] According to von Martius, the women of the Macusi wear broad bands adorned with glass beads both round the arms and the legs.[4]

The Karayá, shortly after the birth of a child, wrap round its arms and the nether part of its thighs some black cotton strings; and a black band, about five centimetres broad, is likewise tied round its waist. Some months later, armlets and anklets, consisting of broad knitted cotton bands, are put on the child; whereas narrower bands, adorned with hanging tassels, are tied below the knees. These bands are worn by the boys up to the age when the lips are pierced, and by the girls till they marry.[1] Likewise, among many tribes in Ecuador I have myself found the custom of tying cotton cords round the arms and legs of very young babies, especially on occasions when they are sickly. The Indians allege that this measure makes the children strong. The same is reported about some other Indian peoples, as the Guarayús in Bolivia[2] and the ancient Incas in Peru,[3] where it has been customary to tie round the arms and legs of newborn children cords or real swaddling-clothes. The Incas kept the child wrapped in such clothes for three months, and believed that if they released the arms before that time they would grow feeble.[4]

---

[1] Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p. 192.

[2] Joest, *Ethnographisches und Verwandtes aus Guyana* (*Intern. Archiv f. Ethnographie*, Bd. V. Supplement, Leyden, 1893), p. 82.

[3] Im Thurn, *op. cit.*, pp. 192, 193.

[4] v. Martius, *Beiträge zur Ethnographie Amerika's*, i. 642.

Among the tribes of the Uaupés the women chiefly adorn themselves with stiff bands applied round the wrists and below the knees, so as to make the calves swell.[5] The Yabahána and Yahúna men of the Rio Apaporís use long and broad girdles of the white bast of a tree and fasten bands round the upper arm, which are drawn as tight as possible and are never removed.[6] The Indians in the region of the rivers Issá and Yapurá wear ligatures on the upper arm, and women similar ligatures below the knees and above the ankles to swell out the muscles. The women, moreover, fasten white down of the currasow duck to the calves with rubber latex, the consequence being that the legs, covered both with the ligatures and the feathers, look enormously thick.[7] Similar customs prevail among the Juris, the Tecunas, the Marauhas, and other Brazilian tribes.[8]

The Chacobo men in Bolivia are in the habit of tying soft basten bands round their legs, thighs, and wrists. Round the upper arm, again, they have bands adorned with parrot feathers and long boas of down. The women have much the same decoration, but seldom wear any bands round the legs. Their arms are adorned with bracelets of black seeds, and round the upper arm they generally wear ornaments of snails' shells and feathers.[1]

---

[1] Ehrenreich, *Beiträge zur Völkerkunde Brasiliens*, p. 11.

[2] Cardús, *Las misiones franciscanas*, p. 74.

[3] Garcilasso de la Vega, *Comentarios reales*, bk. iv., c. 12.

[4] Garcilasso de la Vega, *loc. cit.*

[5] v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 597.

[6] Koch-Grünberg, *Zwei Jahre unter den Indianern*, ii. 282.

[7] Whiffen, "A Short Account of the Indians of the Issá-Yapurá District," in *Folklore*, March, 1913, p. 49.

[8] v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 404, 427, 443, 504, 513 *sq.*, 642.

Even in the instances quoted there are some details which indicate that we are dealing, not with real embellishments, but with practical and, more strictly speaking, magical measures. Thus, cords and bands applied to the limbs of newborn children, for example, cannot easily be explained either as ornaments or as natural protections. On the other hand, we know that, according to a general Indian idea, newborn children are badly exposed to the attacks of evil spirits, against which various precautions must be taken. Thus the Incas, who believed that the arms of the children would grow feeble if they were not wrapped in clothes for some time, evidently had the idea that the clothes would protect them against the mysterious foes which cause weakness or any other disorder in the human body. Similarly, when the Karayá boys have to keep the bands round the arms and the legs "up to the age when the lips are pierced," this is evidently due to a definite idea: one magical measure, adapted to early childhood, is replaced by another more elaborate one adapted to a somewhat more advanced age. Again, the practice of the Japurá Indians and of the Chacobo to cover the arms and the calves with down or feathers, in addition to the bands applied to them, can hardly be due to anything but superstitious considerations. In my chapter on feather ornaments I have pointed out that feathers and down, which are regarded as powerful charms and "medicines," are frequently by the Indians applied to different parts of the body with a view to keeping off evil supernatural influences.

It seems to be a common Indian idea that by merely tying round a limb with certain bands or ligatures one can protect it against evil spirits, and even force them to leave it if they have already taken possession of it. In other words, *the bandage is a means of magical conjuration.*[2] Often, but not always, it is applied with certain ceremonies, or is made of a material which is supposed to possess in itself some mysterious power. Among the Chorotis in Chaco it was no rare thing to see old men and women—especially when they were suffering from some pulmonary catarrh or cough, or from rheumatism—wearing a cord or strap bound tightly round the chest. The idea appeared to be that the demon who had entered the chest and caused the evil should be forced to leave the body, or at least prevented from penetrating further. On one occasion I met an old woman whose right forearm had been paralyzed, probably by a fit of apoplexy. She had a dirty woollen band tied round the arm at the wrist, and when I wanted to remove the useless thing, she would not allow it, declaring that it was "good." I soon learnt that the arm had been seized by an evil *mohsek*, and realized that the band was "good" as a sort of charm against the demon.

---

[1] Nordenskiöld, *Indianer och hvita*, pp. 103, 104.

[2] From this point of view, the custom of applying bands to arms, legs, or other parts of the body as "ornaments" may be compared with the practice of tying rags on bushes and trees for superstitious reasons, which prevails among many uncivilized peoples. This, as well as the analogous custom of throwing pins into wells, of driving nails into trees and stocks, etc., has erroneously been

Just as civilized people may, in a case of snake-bite, apply a ligature or cord round the bitten limb above the wound so as to prevent the poison from spreading, so the Indians consider such ligatures as a hindrance to evil spirits. Among the Chorotis the band is not put on with any ceremonies, nor does much importance seem to be attached to the material of which it is made. Yet it must be observed that the wool, being the "hair" of the sheep, is considered to have a mysterious power, and that there is generally the same idea as to cords and bands made of wool. A similar magical efficacy is commonly ascribed to cotton. It is possible that this idea is present to the Indian mind in many cases, where to the civilized observer there seems to be nothing "mysterious" in the procedure.

Now in these cords and bands, tied round the breast or the arms, we have, I think, the most simple specimens of bracelets, girdles, and other similar magical ornaments used by the Indians in South America. Often the ligatures are put on under circumstances which plainly reveal the true nature of the custom.

The Cainguá on the upper Paraná usually wear on the upper arm, just below the knee, over the ankle, and on the left wrist a strap of skin, which is wound round the limb several times, so that it forms

---

interpreted as acts of ceremonial union with the spirit identified with well, tree, or stock (Hartland, *The Legend of Perseus*, ii. 228). In such cases we are probably, on the contrary, dealing with purely magical conjurations, whereby feared spirits are coerced and rendered harmless. Cp. also what Professor Westermarck says about the tying of bands or rags as a magical custom among the Arabs in Morocco (*The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, ii. 584 *sq.*).

a band about five centimetres broad. The objects of these bandages are, according to the statement of the Indians: that of those round the legs, that they may not get tired; that of those round the arms, that they may have more strength; the band round the left wrist, again, only serves as a protection against the blow of the bow-string when the Indian shoots off the arrow.[1] The Jibaros and Canelos Indians in eastern Ecuador are in the habit of wearing broad armlets consisting of the skin of the large iguana lizard, called *sunday* or *hayámbi*, which are supposed to give much strength to the arm. The latter Indians, when starting to harpoon the fish *paichi* (*Arapaima gigas*), tie round the wrist of their right hand a special bark called *nini cara caspi* (" the bark of the fire-tree "). This ligature is believed to give the shooter a very strong and steady arm to hit the *paichi* with the harpoon. The expression, so commonly used by the Indians of certain magical ornaments, that they give the body or a special part of it " strength," as I have often found myself, is only a circumlocution, and in reality implies that the ornament in question is a protection against evil spirits. According to the Indian idea, any bodily weakness depends on supernatural causes; the evil spirits attach themselves to certain limbs, mix in the blood, etc., causing ailments and disorders of every kind. Hence, when the Indian has recourse to charms, bleedings, and other means which he believes are able to keep off or expel the intruders, these measures naturally have the effect of " strengthening " the body or a special part of it.

This belief in the supernatural efficacy of the band-ornaments is also brought out in the case of the Culinos and the Marauhas on the Amazon, who, according to von Martius, have the custom of wearing plaited cotton bands adorned with feathers round the ankles. " It is remarkable," von Martius adds, " that among the Indians the hordes, who use these national badges, are famous as runners."[2]

The same idea clearly appears, for instance, in cases when bands and girdles are applied to a woman's body on certain especially critical occasions. Thus, among the Chiriguanos, a childbed woman, immediately after the deliverance, was seized by the assistants, who stretched her out naked on the ground and tied tightly round her venter some cords of a girdle, whereupon they covered her with a mantle.[3]

---

[1] Ambrosetti, *Los Indios Caingua del alto Paraná*, p. 47.

[2] v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 428.

[3] Del Campana, *Notizie intorno ai Ciriguani* (*Archivio per l'antropologia e la etnologia*, Firenze, 1902), p. 71. Corrado, *El colegio franciscano de Tarija*, p. 51.

There can be little doubt that the cords tied round the woman's venter were believed to prevent the evil spirits from entering her through the critical parts. Among some peoples, women are treated much in the same way at puberty. Thus, among the Caribs, girls at their first menstruation had the hair cut, were scarified and tattooed, whereupon their whole body and their arms were tied round with cotton cords. A decoration with teeth of wild animals completed the treatment.[1] The idea underlying the practice of tying cords round the girl's body, it seems to me, is conspicuous when regarded in the light of the rest of the ceremonies mentioned. All these had for their object the protection of the girl against the invisible foes, and the enhancement of her power of resistance against them for the future. Among the Tupis, as soon as a girl became marriageable, "cotton cords were tied round her waist and round the fleshy parts of both arms; they denoted a state of maidenhood, and if any but a maiden wore them, they were persuaded that *Anhanga* would fetch her away." Southey characterizes this as a "gratuitous superstition," and adds that "it cannot have been invented for the purpose of keeping the women chaste till marriage, for these bands were broken without fear, and incontinence was not regarded as an offence."[2]

Dr. Westermarck mentions this statement as a testimony in support of his general theory that most savage ornaments are simply means of attracting the opposite sex.[3] But just as, in my opinion, the whole means-of-attraction theory depends on a misunderstanding of the primitive customs relating to self-decoration, so also, I believe, in this particular case a different explanation must be given. Dr. Westermarck overlooks the passage in Southey's statement which gives the clue to the whole ceremony, namely, that, according to the belief of the Tupis, *Anhanga* (the evil spirit) *would fetch away any woman who, without being a maiden, wore these cords.*[4] From this passage it clearly appears that the said practice was due to some superstition, and the explanation of it seems to be the following: The cotton cords were magical things which were put on the girl at the critical epoch in her life when she became a woman, in order to protect her against *Anhanga.* Worn by a person who received them with the proper ceremonies they were useful, but worn by an unauthorized and "uninitiated" person they, on the contrary, became extremely dangerous things, because they were infected or tabooed by the contact with the evil spirit. Many analogous cases of magical taboo could be adduced from South America. Thus, for example, the dancing-masks and the bull-roarers, as we shall find later on, are purely magical instruments with which the sorcerers wearing them are able to conjure the spirits of the dead. But if, after the conjuration, any uninitiated person, especially a woman or a child, handles or even looks at these instruments, he will, according to the Indian belief, die or suffer some other severe misfortune. The demons, which have been compelled to enter the instrument, have infected it through contact, the infection proving afterwards fatal to anybody who has not, through a special initiation, been made immune against it. Exactly the same was the case with the cords with which the Tupi girls were encircled at puberty. If at marriage they were removed, this is no evidence that before they were only means of attracting the men. Marriage forms a new important epoch in the life of the Indian woman, at which a special magical "decoration" often takes place. The cords may, of course, also have been regarded as outward signs that the girl was marriageable, but this was certainly a secondary idea.

---

[1] Lafitau, *Mœurs des sauvages Amériquains*, i. 291.

[2] Southey, *History of Brazil*, i. 240, 241. v. Martius mentions the same custom, and adds that he also found it among the Juris and some other Brazilian tribes (*op. cit.*, i. 111).

[3] Westermarck, *History of Human Marriage* (1901), p. 196.

[4] Southey, *op. cit.*, i. 241.

The ancient Peruvians wound round their arms and legs bands beset with beads of gold and silver, with small turquoises, with white and red sea shells, the custom being, however, limited to the men.[1] The fact that beads, pieces of gold and silver, turquoises, etc., are commonly used as amulets, makes it probable that these armlets and leglets were likewise worn for superstitious reasons.

The magical ligatures are, of course, first of all applied to delicate or exposed parts of the body. For a woman especially the ventral parts are critical; evil spirits may enter her through them, and must be kept off. That the arms and the legs are frequently "decorated" with charms of various kinds is also easy to understand. The Indian man needs strong muscles, for instance, for pulling the bow in hunting and in war, and it is much the same with the woman, who every day has to carry home heavy burdens of firewood or wild fruits. For long and trying wanderings strong legs are needed both by men and women. The common practice of bleeding the arms and legs shows how anxious the Indian is to enhance by artificial means the strength of these important extremities. The head, being particularly regarded as the seat of the soul, and as a most critical part of the body, is not only protected by elaborate ornaments of different kinds, but also by way of head-coverings, veils, or simple frontals and bands, like those tied round the arms and the legs. Real head-gears are not used by any Indians east of the Andes—the long hair affords a natural protection against the rays of the sun and the cold—but when covering of the head occasionally takes place it is in most cases due to superstitious motives. Thus, among many tribes, especially in Chaco, it is customary to veil the head of a girl at her first menstruation. This custom prevails, for instance, among the Tobas, the Matacos, the Chorotis, and the Ashluslays on the Pilcomayo, and the Indians also explained to me why it was done; it is a protection against evil spirits. The veil prevents the spirits from attacking the head of the girl and from penetrating into her eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. There is the same idea in many other cases of veiling. Thus, Dr. Nordenskiöld was present at a dance of the Argentine Matacos, performed to cure a sick woman, whereby some of the dancing sorcerers had the head covered with a cloth.[1] The " cure " essentially consisted in an exorcism of the evil disease-spirit, and the veiling of the face was a simple means of precaution, since there is always the danger that the demon, on quitting the body of the sick person, may enter into the body of the sorcerer. For a similar reason, covering of the head may sometimes be resorted to after the death of a near relative. Thus, among the Lenguas the nearest relatives of the deceased not only cut their hair, but also place a covering over their head, and when they enter a new village they are closely muffled up.[2] The same mourning custom I have myself noticed among the Quichuas in the mountain regions of Ecuador. Sometimes, instead of a covering, a simple frontal is considered sufficient as a safeguard against the feared spirit. Dr. Krause relates that among the Karayá, when a man dies, his mother and wife must cut their hair and, moreover, apply basten or cotton bands round the head, sometimes also round the waist.[3] These bands act as charms to keep off evil spirits, in the same way as the cotton cords which, among some tribes, are tied round the arms and waist of young girls at puberty. Such mourning frontals seem also to have been in vogue in ancient Peru, as appears from some statements by Cieza de León. Thus, among the Collas, after a death, the women used to wail much and apply bands of twisted Spanish grass round their heads " to show off their sorrow."[1] Similarly, the Indians in the Cauca valley in mourning used to wear a four-inches-broad woollen band round the head.[2] In such cases the frontals serve much the same object as the black painting so often used in mourning by the Indians in South America.

---

[1] Zárate, *Historia del Peru* (*Biblioteca de autores Españoles,* tomo xxvi.), p. 465.

---

[1] Nordenskiöld, *Indianerleben*, p. 106.

[2] Grubb, *An Unknown People in an Unknown Land*, p. 169.

[3] Krause, *In den Wildnissen Brasiliens*, p. 331.

Other head-gears which evidently have been used for superstitious reasons we find, for instance, in the high, pointed hats, called *chuco*, which were worn by the Collas in Peru in connection with the practice of flattening the head, and which were made " with many ceremonies and superstitions."[3] Likewise, the conical dancing-hats worn by the Kobéua and the Koróa on the Rio Caduiary at one of their religious dances[4] certainly formed part and parcel of the elaborate magical equipment put on for such occasions. The Lenguas at feasts wear, among other ornaments, a head-dress consisting of a broad red woollen band, adorned with bright scarlet feathers, of which Mr. Grubb expressly states that it is regarded as a charm, especially against the evil spirit of the swamps.[5] The Chorotis and Ashluslays on festive occasions wear hoods knitted of red woollen yarn, and adorned with snails' shells and big ostrich plumes.[6] These hoods have no doubt originally been charms in the same way as the ornamental head-dress of the Lenguas.

In many cases the very material of which frontals, girdles, and other ornamental bands are made is evidence that they are worn as magical charms. From this point of view the Araucanians, who used frontals made of the skin of their slain enemies,[7] may be compared with the Jibaros, who wear girdles of twisted human hair.[8] The neighbours of the Jibaros, the Indians in the ancient province of Maynas, were in the habit of making cinctures of the hair of their slain enemies, with which they covered their own hair when they prepared themselves for a battle.[1] In Chaco similar cinctures of human hair have been used by the Guaycurús and the Chamacoco, being regarded as distinguishing badges for warriors.[2] In all these cases we are dealing with trophies to which great magical power is ascribed. Again, of the Bororó on the Xingú we hear that not only the teeth, but also the hair of slain enemies was regarded as a protection. The Indians, therefore, used to twist it into cords, which were highly appreciated. Bundles of hair, as well as feathers, hung down from the armlets.[3] Bracelets and anklets of human hair are also used by the Guaraunos on the Orinoco, being tied tightly round the arms and the legs.[4] The Karayá, on the other hand, at feasts wear armlets of jaguar's or wild-cat's skin, adorned with bunches of parrot's or heron's feathers.[5]

---

[1] Cieza de León, *La cronica del Perú* (Primera parte), cc. 100, 101. Cp. Las Casas, *De las antiguas gentes del Peru*, p. 124: " Por luto se tresquilan las mujeres y traen un paño grande sobre la cabeza."

[2] Cieza de León, *op. cit.*, c. 84.

[3] Cobo, *Historia del nuevo mundo*, iv. 176. Cp. *supra*, p. 61.

[4] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, ii. 167, 168.

[5] Grubb, *op. cit.*, p. 71. Cp. *supra*, p. 98.

[6] See *supra*, p. 81.

[7] Rosales, *Historia general de el Reyno de Chile*, i. 126.

[8] Rivet, *Les Indiens Jibaros* (*L'Antropologie*, vol. xix., 1908), p. 249.

According to Dr. Krause, the Karayá moreover wear girdles twisted of black and white cotton and provided with tassels of various kinds. Often they are also adorned with big feather rosettes, which hang down from the nether border. These girdles are used at wrestling matches, seldom on other occasions.[6] The last passage in the statement, it seems to me, is significant. In wrestling strong hips are required, and the Indian idea that certain bands and cords are able to impart strength to the limb to which they are applied makes it probable that this is the true reason why the Karayá adorn themselves with the elaborately-made girdles on that occasion.

The Bororó women practise the curious custom of lacing in the waist with a ten-inches-broad piece of a tree bark, and they do so with such a force that the flesh projects from the nether border of the girdle. Some Bororó women use a piece of tapir's skin for the same purpose.[7] No other details are given with regard to these stays, from which to draw a conclusion as to the original motives for wearing them. But there is a statement about an analogous practice of the Umaúa in north-west Brazil which is more suggestive. The men, Dr. Koch-Grünberg says, wear a ribbon of tree bast, about thirty-five centimetres broad, round the waist as a sort of girdle, which reaches up to the arm-pits, thus covering nearly the whole breast and stomach. Round this ribbon, the outside of which is painted red with *urucú*, some softer basten bands are stretched, and these usually are ornamented with peculiar figures and patterns in red rosin colour. Some of the figures represent animals (as snakes, fishes, etc.), or parts of animals; others, again, symbolize the souls of the medicine-men. We are, moreover, told that these girdles are never removed before they are worn out and useless; then they are replaced by new ones. The penis is drawn up under this basten girdle and tied to the body by means of a waist cord.[1]

---

[1] Figueroa, *Relación de las misiones de la Compañia de Jesús en el pais de los Maynas*, p. 257.

[2] Boggiani, *I Caduvei*, p. 295 (also note 2).

[3] v. d. Steinen, *Unter den Naturvölkern Central-Brasiliens*, p. 477.

[4] Chaffanjon, *L'Orénoque et le Caura*, p. 10.

[5] Ehrenreich, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

[6] Krause, *op. cit.*, p. 239 *sq.*

[7] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 473.

I shall treat of these figures and patterns elsewhere in dealing with the psychology of the Indian ornamental art. Let it suffice at present to say that they are good evidence that these ornamented girdles are essentially magical protections against evil spirits, represented in the figures painted on them. The decorative figures, animals, human spirits, etc., which the Indian applies to his clothes and to his other belongings, are by no means the results of a gratuitous play of his imagination, but have a profound magical significance.

From the ornamental clothes just dealt with we naturally come to the custom of covering the genital parts. It is a well-known fact that the Indians of tropical America, although otherwise they may go entirely naked or only wearing their ornaments, generally have some scanty covering round the loins. The civilized European, regarding these waist-clothes, might readily suppose that they are simply used for the sake of decency, and it has, indeed, long been a current opinion that this feeling, being innate in the human mind, is equally familiar to the uncultured savage as to civilized man. Now we know, however, that this assumption is erroneous. In fact, everybody who lives for some time in close contact with primitive peoples must soon be convinced that the " sense of shame " is essentially unknown to the savage, and that the custom of covering certain parts of the body cannot have originated in this feeling, but must be referred to some other psychological causes. At any rate, this is conspicuously true of the natives of South America. Thus among the Chaco tribes, as the Matacos, the Chorotis, and the Tobas, I had myself no difficulty in obtaining, even from young women, the native equivalents for certain words that civilized people generally do not mention from a sense of decency. Likewise, they spoke quite freely, for instance, of things connected with the sexual act as the most natural thing in the world. Although both men and women generally wore a woollen cloth round the loins or a narrow waist-belt, it sometimes happened that the men—for instance, on their return from fishing—walked about for a while entirely naked even among the women, without arousing the least sensation. *Naturalia non sunt turpia*—that is evidently the tacit maxim of the Indian with regard to all sexual relationships. The same experience has been noted by many other travellers in South America.[1] The mere nakedness is not considered anything to blush at; on the contrary, peoples who are accustomed to go naked mostly are ashamed to cover themselves and look upon garments as something indecent. Thus, the ancient traveller de Lery mentions with astonishment the remarkable dislike the Tupis displayed to covering themselves with the garments which were offered them. To make them dress was simply impossible. Some captives who were kept as slaves at the fort, and had been forced to wear shirts and other clothes, used the first opportunity to rid themselves of these strange things.[2] Father Gumilla gives an eloquent expression to the same Indian view with special reference to the tribes of the Orinoco. Many unexperienced missionaries, he says, have distributed some clothes, especially among the women, in order that they may dress decently, but in vain, for they throw them into the river, or they hide them so that they may not have to wear them; and when they are admonished to cover themselves they answer: " We do not cover ourselves *for we are ashamed to do it*." " They know the shame and blush, but they change the signification of these words; for they blush at dressing themselves, and are quite at ease and contented in their accustomed nakedness."[3]

---

[1] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, ii. 114 *sq.*

Gumilla here points out a general psychological law, and his statement most clearly shows how relative and conventional the ideas of modesty are among different races of mankind.

On the other hand, we find that peoples who from one reason or another have come to cover certain parts of the body generally blush at denuding them. Thus, in Chaco, I observed that whereas the Choroti women, who only wear a short garment round the loins, never displayed any shame at showing their bare breasts, the Toba women, who nowadays mostly use a dress called *tipoy*, which covers almost the whole body, were very reluctant to denude their bosom, for instance, for photographing. This reluctance was not due to actual shame, for these Indians, as already mentioned, do not consider it really indecent to show any part of the body, and the dress of the Toba women was formerly just as scanty as that of the Choroti women is still. There was merely the notion that the breasts, like the genitals, are parts that ought not to be denuded and shown, for the simple reason that they are generally kept covered. This ought-not-to-be-shown stage, it seems to me, is intermediate between the absolute lack of decency with regard to dress, and the real sense of shame which is gradually developed at a higher stage of culture. I therefore fully agree with Dr. Westermarck when he says that " it is not the feeling of shame that has provoked the covering, but the covering that has provoked the feeling of shame."[1]

---

[1] See, for instance, Nordenskiöld, *op. cit.*, p. 225. Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 245. v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, pp. 193-195. de Rochefort, *Histoire naturelle et morale des Iles Antilles*, p. 441.

[2] de Lery, *Histoire d'un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil*, p. 126 *sq.*

[3] Gumilla, *Historia natural de las naciones del Rio Orinoco*, i. 122.

Now if the custom of covering the genital organs has not originated in any sense of decency, there arises the question how we are to account for it. Dr. Westermarck's theory that the covering or half-covering is only a " sexual lure," or one of the means by which savage men and women endeavour to make themselves more attractive to each other,[2] attaches too much weight to purely erotic motives and cannot be upheld, at least not as a general theory. In support of his thesis, Dr. Westermarck, among others, quotes an English traveller, Mr. Simson, who, when speaking of the upper Napo Indians in Ecuador, remarks: " Clothing with all savages is primarily looked upon as a mere embellishment, though Indians who have frequent communication with more civilized men begin to show some shame when entirely nude."[3] But a passing traveller like Mr. Simson should never be quoted as an authority in so delicate a question as that concerning the origin of clothing with savages. It is, moreover, quite evident that the writer only expresses his own private opinion in the passage mentioned, and there is nothing to indicate that it was founded on direct statements of the natives. Since I have myself visited both the Napo Indians and the wild tribes of Ecuador, and studied them much more thoroughly than Mr. Simson,

---

[1] Westermarck, *History of Human Marriage* (1901), p. 208.

[2] Westermarck, *op. cit.* (1901), pp. 192, 201. Idem, *History of Human Marriage* (1921), i. 553.

[3] Westermarck, *op. cit.* (1921), i. 551.

I am able to testify that, as far as I can see, there are absolutely no facts to be gathered from among the natives in support of the theory that pubic covering or clothing in general was originally by the Indians adopted as a "sexual lure," or even as an "ornament." Nay, such a theory is quite contrary to the psychology of the Indians, as I know them. Equally doubtful as evidence is the statement made in passing by Professor von den Steinen, and likewise quoted by Dr. Westermarck, that the Bakaïri of Central Brazil "envy us our clothes as a valuable ornament."[1] If the savage Indian envies civilized man his clothes—what is not generally the case—it is certainly not because he regards them as "ornaments," but because he appreciates them as a natural protection for the body.

In trying to explain the origin of pubic covering also, we have, in the first place, to take the Indian superstition into account. However, some practical non-religious motives may also to a certain degree have induced Indian men and women to cover the genital organs. Thus, everybody who has some experience of the tropical and subtropical regions in South America realizes how necessary it is for the Indian to protect these delicate parts against such plagues as flies and other insects. This necessity is even greater for the female sex than for the male. Again, even for the pure sake of convenience, an Indian man may cover or tie up his penis during his wanderings in the thickets and during hunting and war expeditions. Thus, for instance, engineer Waehneldt states that the Bororô men on the Rio Jaurú only used to tie the glans to the venter by means of a fine bast cord "in order that it may be kept free from insects and that it may not be injured in running."[2] Far more important are, nevertheless, both for men and women, certain considerations as to the mysterious dangers to which the Indians believe themselves to be exposed in their nude state.

Professor Y. Hirn has pointed out that the wearing of clothes may originally have, to a certain degree, been due to superstitious reasons. "The facts of generation," he says, "are regarded with a wonder which sometimes approaches awe and sometimes rises to religious respect. It is probable, therefore, that there are many primitive tribes which cover themselves in the most scrupulous manner not at all from a sense of decency, but to avoid magical influence. . . ." The reproductive organs themselves, owing to the same consideration, need more than anything else to be protected against dangerous influences. There is, for instance, the fear of the evil eye. Moreover, all the innumerable spirits that populate the atmosphere constitute so many dangers, against which the savage has to protect himself by every possible means.[1]

---

[1] Westermarck, *op. cit.*, i. 552.

[2] Waehneldt, "Exploração da Provincia do Mato Grosso," in *Revista Trimensal do Instituto historico y geographico do Brasil*, Bd. XXVII., 1848, p. 215. Whether this was the *only* reason for thus tying up the penis, I doubt.

These points of view are no doubt quite right, but the facts Professor Hirn adduces to illustrate them are exceedingly few, and his theory, as it is set forth, is hardly more than an uncertain suggestion or hypothesis. The idea, prevailing among some Australian natives and even elsewhere, that the spirits of children are supposed to be especially fond of travelling in whirlwinds, and that the wind is capable of bringing about impregnation,[2] is too accidental and particular to permit of any general conclusions. But there are some other circumstances to take into consideration, which give us an important insight into the psychology of the female dress not only in America, but probably in other parts of the world also, namely, the ideas which the savage connects with the mysterious phenomena of puberty and of menstruation. According to the account I have given before of the Indian theory of menstruation,[3] woman is supposed to be at those periods particularly exposed to the attacks of evil spirits. The mysterious foes try to enter her through every opening of the body, and especially through the genitals, the consequence being, in case they succeed, that she will either fall ill and die or give birth to a monster. As we have seen, the rule is, for instance in Chaco, that the girl's face and whole body are carefully covered during the critical days of her first menstruation. According to the idea of the Matacos and the Chorotis, an evil *aittáh* or *mohsek* is trying to enter her, especially through the secret parts. The Tobas have the same idea, but, moreover, fancy that on that occasion the demons take the form of snakes, which in great number, although in an invisible shape, are making their onset on the girl. The demoniac snakes are also attacking the woman at childbirth; hence the precaution of the Tobas to cover carefully the ventral parts of the mother after the deliverance.

The idea that evil spirits in the form of snakes may enter a woman through the pudenda seems to be quite common in South America. On this point a myth, which the Tobas told me, is also illustrative. There was once a Toba girl who persistently refused to marry, and was punished for her obstinacy in the following way: One day, when she went down to the river to bathe, a snake entered her in the water and made her pregnant. The same day in the evening she gave birth to a little snake, which led her down under the ground, where she was obliged to stay. Some time later on she again became pregnant through a snake during bathing, and so forth. The Chiriguanos, whose puberty ceremonies I have likewise accounted for, have a similar belief. The girl is kept secluded and is protected in various ways, because a mysterious snake, called *boirussu*, is supposed to be lurking in the neighbourhood, looking for a convenient opportunity to dishonour her.[1] The Guarayús seem to have a similar idea, accounting for menstruation in the following way: The girl has passed through some water, and "a snake or water insect has seen (not bitten) her."[2] The Guarayús are related to the Chiriguanos and are therefore likely to have much the same superstitions. But it is remarkable that the snake-motive also occurs in other parts of South America, among tribes who cannot possibly have borrowed it from the peoples mentioned. Thus, the ancient Indians of the Orinoco, we are told, believed that women during their menstrual periods were particularly exposed to the "amorous invasions" of snakes. They were not, therefore, during these days, allowed to wander in the woods. When once a woman had been taken ill with diphtheria and died, her husband ascribed this accident to her own carelessness: she had during her menses exposed herself to the attacks of snakes.[3] Again, of the Macusis in Guiana, Schomburgk states that women are regarded as unclean, not only at puberty, but also during the following monthly courses. They are not allowed to bathe nor to wander in the forest "because they may expose themselves to the amorous attacks of snakes."[4]

---

[1] Hirn, *Origins of Art*, pp. 217-219.

[2] Hirn, *op. cit.*, p. 218 *sq.*

[3] See *supra*, p. 10.

---

[1] Del Campana, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

[2] Nordenskiöld, *Indianer och hvita*, p. 167. Whether the Guarayús really believe that this is the *cause* of the menstruation, seems to me doubtful. It is more probable that they merely have the same idea as some other Indian tribes—namely, that a snake or water insect may enter the girl if she carelessly exposes herself during the critical days.

[3] Gilij, *Saggio di storia Americana*, ii. 133.

[4] Schomburgk, *Reisen in British-Guiana*, ii. 316. For more instances from Guiana, see Roth, *Animism and Folklore of the Guiana Indians*, p. 369 and *passim*.

This particular superstition with regard to menstruous women is probably much more common in South America than the above instances seem to indicate. But whether the demons assume the shape of snakes or not, is immaterial; universal certainly is the idea that they take a special interest in women who are in the delicate condition mentioned and that illness and death, or supernatural birth, may be the consequence of their mysterious operation. According to the Indian theory of generation, conception may otherwise ensue than through the natural sexual intercourse. A woman may likewise become pregnant through some invisible demoniac being directly entering her. We not only hear of impregnation through snakes. Indian myths and legends, to which I shall refer again later on, also speak of women made pregnant, during bathing, by spirits incarnated in fishes, or embodied in floating tree-trunks. The Napo and Canelos Indians in Ecuador believe that it is very dangerous for a menstruous woman to wander alone in the wood, for the demon (*supai*) is trying to seduce her, thereat taking the shape of an Indian, of a boa serpent, of the rainbow, etc. Sometimes the demon may enter her at bathing in the shape of a small fish or a water insect. Where the fecundating spirit is really an evil demon, the being thus engendered, as already pointed out, will be a deformed monster; or twins are born, and that is looked upon as equally unfortunate. Infanticide among the Indians is probably in most cases due to such superstitious ideas. Thus, the Chorotis expressly declared to me that if at birth a child is very sickly or deformed, this is due to its being possessed by an evil *mohsek*, and such a child is generally killed. Of some tribes on the Rio Ucuyali in Peru we are told that " deformed children they put out of the way, saying that they belong to the devil."[1] Likewise, of the ancient Indians of Maynas, Father Chantre Herrera states that they declared that children born with some deformity or natural defect were sons of a demon, and consequently simply threw them away or buried them alive.[2] Similarly, when we hear that the Manaos and some neighbouring tribes on the Amazon are in the habit of burying monsters or deformed children alive, and that all members of the family stand around the grave howling until the newborn babe is completely covered with earth,[1] this strange and barbarous practice is no doubt due to the same superstition: the Indians believed that they were burying a demon. Among the different Indian tribes of Ecuador I have myself found similar ideas. Deformed children as well as twins are always believed to have been engendered through the operation of a demon, and are therefore killed. The Canelos Indians call such a child *supai huahua*, "the son of a demon," and they bury it alive in the forest, alleging that the father of the child—*i.e.*; the demon (*supai*)—will himself come and fetch his son. The custom of burying certain people, and especially small children, alive seems in fact to be resorted to in cases where the person concerned is believed to be wholly possessed by a dangerous evil spirit,[2] or even to have been begotten by such a one. The general Indian custom of killing twins—either both of them or only the second—is probably due to the same consideration. A. von Humboldt, speaking of the Salivas on the Orinoco, says that it is a tenet in their physiology that two children born at once cannot be of the same father; one of the twins is therefore put to death.[3] The statement, no doubt, holds true of all South American Indians. It is more than probable that the child killed is believed to have been engendered through the operation of an evil spirit. The same idea seems to be held by the Chorotis, who look upon the birth of twins as a most unnatural and ominous thing, and therefore always kill the second of them.

---

[1] Orton, *The Andes and the Amazon*, p. 321.

[2] Chantre y Herrera, *Historia de las misiones de la Compañia de Jesús en el Marañon Español*, pp. 74-76. The account this missionary gives of the superstitions and customs of different tribes with regard to monstrous children and twins is of great interest. Cp. also Figueroa, *op. cit.*, p. 241.

Even during the natural sexual intercourse a demon may slink into the woman, bringing about the unfortunate consequences mentioned. To prevent such eventualities circumcisions and bleedings—practices of magical significance—are sometimes undertaken before marriage. This also may be one of the reasons why the Indians are bound to sexual abstinence in certain critical situations—men, for instance, after the slaying of an enemy;[1] women, for instance, after the death of their husband.[2] As a general rule a widow has to wait for a certain time, sometimes a whole year, before she is allowed to marry again. The spirit of the deceased husband is jealously watching her, and may badly influence the offspring engendered in the new union.[3]

---

[1] v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 590.

[2] Thus, according to the missionary Cardús, it has been customary among the Tobas to bury an unweaned baby alive, together with its mother, when the latter died (Cardús, *op. cit.*, p. 263). The explanation of this custom I take to be that, on account of the intimate relationship which exists between the mother and her sucking child, the evil spirit which kills the mother is also supposed to take possession of the child, and change it altogether into a dangerous demon, a belief with which the Indians are familiar. The demon who causes the death of a person by entering into him always has a tendency to identify himself with the victim, changing him into an evil spirit, and this seems to be the rule with small children.

[3] v. Humboldt, *Reise in die Aequinoctial-Gegenden des neuen Continents*, iii. 154. Cp. Gumilla, *op. cit.*, i. 214.

The above facts, significant as they are, make us understand how necessary savage women must deem it to cover carefully, or protect with magical means, so critical a part of the body. In fact, in some of the instances mentioned it is expressly stated that women are covered, for instance, at the first menstruation and at childbirth, with a view to protecting them against intruding spirits. In some cases the very way in which the garments are arranged and the decorative appendages with which they are furnished indicate that there are special magical ideas connected with the covering. From this point of view, for instance, the waist-clothes of the Xingú tribes, to which Professor von den Steinen devoted detailed studies, are interesting. Thus, the Bakaïri women—as also the women of the Carib, Arawak, and Tupi tribes in the region round the upper Xingú—wore small triangular clothings of bast, called *uluri*, which were so arranged that they could not possibly have been meant to form a real covering. The only service they did was to keep the mucous membrane back behind the *labia majora*, affording thus some protection for the most delicate part of the genital organs. But a covering seemed to have been "rather avoided than desired."[4] In my chapter on the ornamental art of the Indians I shall again find an opportunity to deal with the *uluri* of the Bakaïri women. Here I only wish to point out that both the triangular form of the *uluri*, their origin from a pattern representing the *meréschu* fish, and, lastly, the ornaments painted on them, in my opinion are evidence that they were essentially magical charms against the mysterious foes women especially fear. This conjecture is confirmed by the fact that the *uluri* was ceremonially put on the girl at the epoch of her first menstruation, an incident which was celebrated with the customary religious rites.[1]

---

[1] This was the rule, for instance, among the Jibaros (Karsten, *op. cit.*, pp. 19, 40), and evidently among the ancient Tupis (see Gottfriedt, *Neue Welt und Amerikanische Historien*, p. 146; Thevet, *Cosmographie universelle*, ii. 932). On North American Indians (Natchez), cp. Charlevoix, *Voyage to North America*, ii. 203.

[2] See the instances mentioned by Dr. Koch, in his *Zum Animismus der sydamerikanischen Indianer* (*Intern. Archiv f. Ethnographie*, Bd. XIII. Supplement, Leyden, 1900), p. 74 *sqq.* Dr. Koch's own explanation of this custom is, however, erroneous.

[3] Such ceremonies performed with the widow before her new marriage as that mentioned by Crevaux, *Voyages dans l'Amérique du Sud*, p. 548, in regard to the Guahivos in Venezuela, can only be interpreted as protective measures against the evil effects arising from the spirit of the first husband. The Jibaros of Ecuador expressly told me that if a widow remarries prematurely after the death of her first husband, the first child she will engender with the new husband is likely to be a monster owing to the operation of the departed spirit. As to the prevalence of similar superstitions among other primitive peoples, see Hartland, *Ritual and Belief*, Essay on *The Haunted Widow*, p. 194 *sqq.*

[4] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, pp. 194, 195.

Similarly, the waist-bindlets of the Trumai women may, it seems to me, be compared with the magical ligatures which some Indians are in the habit of tying round the arms and the legs. It was a strip of soft bast, twisted into a cord in such a way that its object cannot possibly have been to cover the genitals. If really such a covering had been intended, says von den Steinen, a broader strip would certainly have been used.[2] Again, of the Bororó women it is stated that they wore a soft grey waist-band, *which at the menses was replaced by a black one.*[3] When we know, on the one hand, that the black colour is regarded as a powerful charm, and, on the other hand, that the Indian women during their menses have recourse both to paintings and to other magical means of protection, we are justified in concluding that the object of these waist-bands was mainly to keep off evil supernatural influences.

With regard to the waist-clothes of the men, we cannot, of course, assign the same strong psychological evidence for their being originally used for superstitious reasons as with regard to those of the women. Yet it is quite natural that the savage Indian, who, as we have seen, firmly believes that evil spirits are constantly ready to enter any exposed part of his body, passing in the blood and causing bodily disorders of every kind, should take special care of the genital organs. Both the real waist-clothes, and other " decorative " arrangements made with the penis, may therefore often have for their object, not only to afford a natural protection for this limb, but also to keep off supernatural evils from it. This intention is, it seems to me, conspicuous in the envelopes for the penis which are used by many peoples in central and southern Brazil, for instance, by the tribes of the Gesh-group, by the Bororó, etc.[1] The Bororó made them in the following way: A long strip of a yellow palm leaf was rolled and folded into a funnel-like casing (*Stulp*). For feasts the remaining end of the folded leaf was made so as to form a pendant (*Fahne*) which was decorated with red ornaments. The prepuce was drawn through the envelope in such a way that the nether end of the funnel just tied off the point of it. Professor von den Steinen, whose description I am following, is inclined to assume that the object of this penis-envelope was to serve as a protection, especially against flies and ticks.[2] This may in part have been the case. But if my theory of the Indian ornamental painting is correct, it is more than probable that it was first of all a magical ornament to keep off evil influences. What else could have been the significance of the ornamented *Feststulp*? The Bororó feasts had a serious religious character, and the ornaments used at them were certainly not meant to improve the appearance, but to aid in the conjuration of spirits. The fact that the occasion when the *Stulp* was first worn was celebrated with certain ceremonies at which the boy, among other things, had to submit himself to fasting,[3] is further evidence in support of my hypothesis.

---

[1] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, pp. 197, 198.
[2] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 193.
[3] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 193.

Again, the Trumai, as also the Karayá, used to tie round the prepuce before the glans a cotton cord, which mostly was painted red with *urucú*, so that the penis became like the end of a sausage.[4] That this was a protective measure is evident; but my own conjecture is that it had not for its object to protect the glans merely against insects and other natural harms, but also—as may be inferred from the *urucú*-painted cotton cord used for the operation—against evil spirits.

Lastly, an interesting custom reported by Dr. Koch-Grünberg may be mentioned. The festive dress, worn by the Tuyuka and some other tribes on the Rio Tiquié, in part consisted of a long ornamented apron, which was suspended from a waist-belt of bush-hogs' teeth and hung down in front, nearly reaching the ground. The patterns painted on the apron were the usual, representing human figures, "geometrical" lines, etc.[5] Just as the waist-belt of bush-hogs' teeth was a charm, so the ornamented apron offers an interesting specimen of a magical cloth, which probably was supposed to aid effectively in the conjuration during the dance in which it was used.

---

[1] See Friederici in *Mitteilungen aus den deutschen Schutzgebieten*, Ergänzungsheft V., 1912, p. 155.

[2] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

[3] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 504.

[4] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 192 (Trumai). Ehrenreich, *op. cit.*, p. 11 (Karajá). v. Koenigswald, "Die Carajá-Indianer," in *Globus*, Bd. XCIV., 1908, p. 223.

[5] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 289, 319.

To sum up: clothing, and particularly pubic covering, to the savage Indian is essentially a protection against natural and supernatural evils. Protection against the cold and—in tropical regions—against insects and other injurious influences is one conspicuous object of the covering, but a still more important motive for it seems to be the desire to ward off evil spirits and supernatural influences in general. A direct evidence in support of this assertion is found, for instance, in the custom of covering the ventral parts of women at the first menstruation and at childbirth. On the other hand, the theory that pubic covering was originally adopted as a "sexual lure," or, in general, as an "ornament," I have not found confirmed in a single case in South America. All statements to this effect evidently express only the personal idea of travellers who have regarded the customs of primitive peoples from a civilized point of view. The reflection of Mr. Simson about the origin of clothing "with all savages," mentioned above, is typical in this respect, and may be compared with similar unwarranted statements from other parts of the world.

CHAPTER VI

CEREMONIAL MUTILATIONS AND KINDRED CUSTOMS

UNDER the general heading of ceremonial mutilations we shall examine various rites of blood-letting, scarification, finger-cutting, etc., which form, perhaps, the strangest expression of the Indian's desire to tamper with his body for certain practical or seemingly self-decorative ends. In a previous chapter[1] I have incidentally touched upon some practices of this kind, pointing out the main ideas underlying them. It now remains to set forth these ideas in detail and to show how they apply to different occasions on which such sanguinary operations are resorted to.

Scarifications and mutilations of the body are perhaps most often practised after deaths, and as mourning rites they have in fact particularly attracted the attention of students of Indian customs. From that point of view, for instance, the German ethnologist, Dr. Preuss, has discussed these rites in a treatise on the human sacrifices and self-mutilations,[2] and later Dr. Koch has treated of the same questions in his monograph on Indian animism.[3] Both writers arrive at much the same conclusions with regard to the significance of these customs. Just as the sacrifices of slaves and slain enemies, which are performed on the graves of mighty chiefs, according to Dr. Preuss, are designed to appease the revengeful spirit of the dead (*Racheopfer*), so there is the same idea connected with various kinds of self-wounding on such occasions: they are forms of "self-torturing" (*Selbstpeinigung*). The pain which the mourners inflict on themselves will please and satisfy the deceased, and liberate the living from the remorse they feel on account of duties neglected in relation to the dead.[4] Dr. Koch's explanation is much the same. The survivor endeavours to arouse the compassion of the evil death-spirit and to avert its anger from himself by tormenting his body in every possible way, and by depriving himself of his most beautiful adornment, the hair, and in general by putting himself in the most pitiable condition possible. Such, too, is the object of the mortification of the body by fasting, sexual abstinence, etc.[1]

---

[1] See *supra*, Chapter IV., p. 110 *sqq.*

[2] Preuss, *Menschenopfer und Selbstverstümmlung bei der Todtentrauer in Amerika* (*Festschrift für Adolf Bastian*), p. 199 *sqq.*

[3] Koch, *Zum Animismus der sydamerikanischen Indianer* (*Intern. Archiv f. Ethnographie*, Bd. XIII. Supplement, Leyden, 1900), pp. 70, 74, etc.

[4] Preuss, *op. cit.*, pp. 211, 212, 216, 221 *sqq.*, etc.

This explanation, according to which all blood-letting practices at mourning are nothing but a sort of sacrifice based on the principle of " abnegation," may have seemed acceptable enough at a time when our knowledge of the religious thought of savage man was still too scanty for us to realize their true import.[2] That it is, however, erroneous, may be inferred from the very fact that mourning is by no means the only occasion on which rites of blood-letting take place. Why do, for instance, Indian fathers sometimes bleed themselves when they lie in couvade; why are boys and girls scarified at the attainment of puberty, men when they are initiated for chieftainship and priesthood, etc.? Dr. Preuss and Dr. Koch have omitted to account for such cases, and on their theory a satisfactory explanation can hardly be given. It is evident that the practices mentioned are due to some particular religious or magical ideas which can only be found out by a deeper penetration into Indian psychology.

In fact, Dr. Preuss has later abandoned the view mentioned, as appears from his more recent treatise on the origin of religion and art, published in the *Globus*.[3] He now regards all self-bleedings and mutilations, practised at puberty, at warfare, at mourning, etc., as means of enhancing the natural magical power of the body and of warding off evil supernatural influences. Thus, when mourners cut and mutilate themselves, the original object of this practice has been to avert or counteract the baneful magical influence which emanates from the dead body, and to which the nearest relatives are especially exposed.[1] This theory certainly comes much nearer the truth; but Dr. Preuss' reasoning, all through his treatise, is vitiated by the assumption that such and similar superstitious practices of the Indians have, or originally had, nothing at all to do with a belief in spirits, but belong to a " pre-animistic " stage in the evolution of savage thought. " Most forms of the cult point to a time when there did not yet exist any notion of a soul, and when there could be no question about an animation of the objects of nature." Numerous savage religious customs must, therefore, according to Dr. Preuss, be explained not by the conception of a spirit or soul, but by the conception of " the whole of the magical power (*Zauberkraft*) which is dwelling in man," and which is, for instance, identical with what the Iroquois call *orenda*, etc.[2] This is not the proper place to discuss the so-called " pre-animistic hypothesis " at large, and to expose the errors upon which, in my opinion, it rests. I propose to deal with that question in a later chapter. Here I only want to point out that, as far as I can see, at least the beliefs of the South American Indians do not give this theory any support. It is true that the human body itself is regarded as a natural source of power—indeed, according to my hypothesis it is the original source of all supernatural power—through which magical influences can be exerted. But this power is due to the *spirit*, or spiritual energy, which animates the living body, being particularly seated in certain parts of it, and although it often seems to have a somewhat vague and impersonal character, the Indian practically shows a constant tendency to personify it. Of this I have given many examples in previous chapters, and more will presently be given. It must, in fact, be expressly stated that the more we become acquainted with the actual religion of the Indians, the more clearly *animism* appears to be the fundamental belief upon which their religious or superstitious practices are based, not exactly an animism in the well-known Tylorian sense, but still one involving the idea of a sort of spiritual principle or soul which animates the body. Dr. Preuss' endeavour to combat this view and to show the prevalence of " pre-animism " with regard to different Indian customs leads him to a series of obvious misinterpretations.

---

[1] Koch, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

[2] The theory has been set forth, for instance, by Sir E. B. Tylor, who mentions the ceremonial mutilations (finger-cutting, hair-cutting, and blood-letting) from the special point of view of their connection with sacrifice, and holds that the offering of a part of the worshipper's own body to a deity is either simply a gift or tribute, or considered as a *pars pro toto*, representing the whole man (*Primitive Culture*, ii. 363, 365). Even Spencer is inclined to regard scarifications made by relatives in honour of departed spirits as blood-offerings; and, where they are made in propitiation of a deceased chief by all members of the tribe who stand in fear of his ghost, the scars left by the cuts, like other mutilations, according to Spencer, become signs of subjection. In other cases, mutilation of the living has been simply " a sequence of trophy-taking from the slain." Since scars resulting from wounds received in battle are held in great honour, there has gradually arisen the custom of making such scars artificially. Thus, the infliction of torture on reaching maturity has originated " from the habit of making scars artificially in imitation of scars bequeathed in battle " (*Principles of Sociology*, ii. 70, 71, 75, 76, etc.). These, as also many other theories of Spencer's relating to primitive customs, are arbitrary constructions and depend on a lack of knowledge of the psychology of savage man.

[3] Preuss, *Der Ursprung der Religion und Kunst* (*Globus*, Bd. LXXXVI. and LXXXVII., 1904, 1905).

---

[1] Preuss, *op. cit.*, Bd. LXXXVII., pp. 394, 400, etc.

[2] Preuss, *op. cit.*, Bd. LXXXVI., p. 321 *sqq.*

The truth is that, in all ceremonial mutilations, we have neither sacrifices whereby angry ghosts are gratified, nor measures to counteract harmful magical influences, but purification ceremonies by which persons who are in some critical condition rid their organism of dangerous and polluting spirits. The custom of cutting the hair on certain important occasions—a custom mostly limited to the women—has already been treated of in a previous chapter. As we found, the hair-cutting was no sacrifice, but simply a means of ridding the woman of a critical part of her body through which invisible foes might get hold of her. Exactly the same idea will be found to underlie the blood-letting practices of different kinds which play such an important part in the religious ceremonies of the South American Indians.

Quite commonly spread all over South America is the custom of drawing blood from the body in order to get relief in sickness, or, as it is often stated, to enhance the muscular strength of certain limbs, for instance, of the arms and the legs. That blood-letting, practised in cases of disease, is due to magical ideas may already be inferred from the fact that, according to the Indian belief, all illnesses are directly caused by evil spirits. The spirits, as pointed out before, are supposed to enter into the system, and especially to mix in the blood, thus giving rise to ailments of different kinds and to a state of weakness in the particular part of the organism to which they have attached themselves. The Indian thinks that by bleeding that part he will rid himself of the dangerous intruder—just as sometimes he thinks it will leave his body with mere perspiration—and this belief is naturally supported by the fact that in certain cases such purgations really may give some relief. The prevalence of this idea I was myself able to observe among the Chaco tribes. Among these Indians—for instance, among the Chorotis—it is a common thing that the men bleed themselves with a thorn or a sharp splinter of wood before certain important undertakings. Thus, they say that, by drawing blood from the arm, the limb will get more strength for pulling the bow; the practice is therefore especially resorted to before going out on a hunting expedition. If the arm fails or trembles in pulling the bow, its weakness is, according to the belief of the Chorotis, due to the presence of a *mohsek* in the blood, and *they think that the evil demon will leave the body with the blood drawn.* The scars left by the cuts are kept up with care and shown with satisfaction, almost with pride. Evidently it is thought that the very scars afterwards act as a sort of charms against the spirits. Dr. Nordenskiöld noticed the same practice among the Ashluslays on the lower Pilcomayo. After a trying fishing or hunting expedition the Indians may be seen to point their arms and legs furiously with hard wooden splinters, so that the blood flows in streams; and in order to get a keener sight to find the nests of the bees they likewise prick themselves above the eyes.[1] In both cases the idea is that the demon which causes the weakness or fatigue will be driven away from the body, and perhaps killed through the pointed instrument. In fact, there is little doubt that this idea is connected with bleeding throughout South America. Thus, of the Patagonians d'Orbigny expressly states that if an Indian gets tired during a journey, he ascribes this to the operation of an evil spirit, and if then there is no sorcerer present, he bleeds himself on the knees, on the shoulders, or on the arms, " in order that the evil spirits may leave with the blood."[2]

Among the Roocooyen Indians in Venezuela, according to Crevaux, the young men are in the habit of making scarifications upon both arms before they go out canoeing. The biceps is closed above and below, and the skin is cut with a piece of bamboo which has the form of a paper cutter. This operation is supposed to give them more strength for rowing. Crevaux adds that they never start for a great hunting expedition without drawing a little blood from the arms, believing that this will prevent them from trembling when they draw the bow. Similarly, before they undertake a journey by land they never omit to make some incisions upon the calf.[3] As we find, these Indians in northern South America have the same ideas with regard to bleedings as the Chaco tribes and the Patagonians.

The ancient Lules or Tonocotés in Paraguay used bleeding as a cure in their medical art. In carrying out their exorcism, the sorcerers scarified with a knife the spot where the patient felt the pain, sucked at it with the mouth, and pretended to extract the evil intruder in the form of a small arrow.[4] The Guaycurús also practised similar bleedings to cure sickness, a pointed tiger's bone being used for the operation.[1] Even the ancient Incas often had recourse to venesections in cases of sickness. They thought that such bleedings, which were made upon the arms, the thighs, and elsewhere, were useful and necessary, says Garcilasso de la Vega, and they opened the veins as close as possible to the spot where the evil was seated. In the case of severe headache they bled themselves between the eyebrows. The lancet used for this operation was a flint-stone attached to a stick, which was split at the end.[2] The same custom is still largely practised by the Brazilian tribes. Thus, among the Karayá, when a person feels pain in a part of the body, a triangular piece of a sharp cuyen shell is stuck deep into the bad spot, and the skin around it is subsequently quickly scarified in different directions. Not seldom ground pepper is put into the wound in order to enhance the efficacy of the operation. Even when no particular pain is felt such blood-lettings are incidentally made upon the arms and the legs with a view to "enhancing their muscular strength."[3] Dr. Preuss adduces this statement in support of his "pre-animistic" theory, the object of the operation being, according to his explanation, simply to increase the natural magical power of the body.[4] It is, however, as we have seen, quite clear that pure animism underlies the ceremony, inasmuch as its aim is in fact to strengthen the muscles by expelling and intimidating the demon who causes the weakness of the limb.

---

[1] Nordenskiöld, *Indianerleben*, p. 54.

[2] d'Orbigny, *Voyage dans l'Amérique méridionale*, ii. 93.

[3] Crevaux, *Voyage dans l'Amérique du Sud*, p. 280. For more instances of this kind from Guiana, see Roth, *Animism and Folklore of the Guiana Indians*, p. 278.

[4] Lozano, *Descripción chorographica de las Provincias del Gran Chaco*, p. 95.

The Yahúna on the Rio Apaporís in north-west Brazil likewise are in the habit of scarifying themselves in various diseases, and in order to strengthen their muscles. For the operation they use a special instrument, consisting of a piece of a gourd's shell to which small pointed teeth of the *trahira* fish are attached in a row.[5] Similar bleeding-instruments are in vogue among the tribes of the Xingú, who likewise practise scarifications as a sort of universal remedy. It is used for young and old people alike, and in the same way by all tribes. The skin is scarified and allowed to bleed for a while, whereupon soot or the juice of a fruit is rubbed into the wounds. The scars after these operations are especially seen all over the arms. In order that the boys may get keen sight and a strong arm for shooting, they are scarified in the face and on the upper arm.[1] The instruments with which bleedings are carried out are, in fact, of a particular interest, because a special magical power is evidently often ascribed to them. In a previous chapter I have mentioned the ornamented arrow-like stick, called *baragára*, with which the Bororó used to pierce the lips of their boys. As pointed out, this instrument was supposed to possess by itself a magical power which especially was due to the many-coloured feathers with which it was richly decorated. The object of the ceremony performed with the boys was not only to draw the impure blood from their face, but also to intimidate or conjure the evil spirit attached to it.[2] This particular idea is evidently often connected with the bleeding ceremonies. Thus, von Spix and von Martius, speaking of the Puris, the Coroados, and some other tribes on the Amazon, state that in their medicine these do not, when it seems necessary, shrink from drawing considerable quantities of blood from their body, nor even from cutting off limbs. They know the practice of venesection and perform it on the arm, the operation being carried out by letting off from a miniature bow a small arrow, to the point of which the piece of a crystal is attached. The arrow was pressed against the vein before it was shot.[3] The crystal, attached to the arrow, was no doubt a charm, according to an idea commonly held of crystals in America. Crevaux, speaking of the Guahivos of the Orinoco, states that on the neck of one of them he noticed a bit of crystal set in the cavity of an alligator's tooth. "The whole has the name of *guanare*. . . . It is with this *guanare* that the Guahivos throw spells on their hated neighbours, the Piaroas. . . . Every mineral that presents in its lines and shape a certain regularity is to them the work of a devil or a sorcerer."[4] In Guiana, according to Dr. Roth, "crystals are employed for charming, bewitching, or cursing others,"[5] and Schomburgk expressly states that "the Macusis and Wapisianas cut each other's legs with a piece of rock crystal, an instrument to which they ascribed particular virtue, refusing instead of it my offer of a lancet."[6] The custom of using a small bow and arrow at bleeding is also said to exist among the tribes of the Rio Doce.[7] Similarly, among the

---

[1] Sanchez Labrador, *El Paraguay catolico*, ii. 44.

[2] Garcilasso de la Vega, *Comentarios reales*, bk. ii., c. 24.

[3] Ehrenreich, *Beiträge zur Võlkerkunde Brasiliens*, p. 33.

[4] Preuss, *op. cit.*, Bd. LXXXVII., p. 399.

[5] Koch-Grünberg, *Zwei Jahre unter den Indianern*, ii. 289.

[1] v. d. Steinen, *Unter den Naturvölkern Central-Brasiliens*, p. 188.

[2] See *supra*, p. 112.

[3] v. Spix and v. Martius, *Reise in Brasilien*, i. 383.

[4] Crevaux, *op. cit.*, p. 554.

[5] Roth, *op. cit.*, p. 332.

[6] Schomburgk, quoted by Roth, *op. cit.*, p. 332.

[7] Wied-Neuwied, *Reise nach Brasilien*, ii. 54.

Guarayús in Bolivia boys were formerly bled by means of a small bow and arrow in order that they might become good bowmen.[1] The method of bleeding in these and similar cases is too peculiar to be accidental.

The significance of the arrow as a magical charm is easier to understand when we know the idea that the Indians have about the origin of certain bodily evils. A mysterious pain or ailment suddenly befalling man is explained as an arrow-shot discharged by an evil spirit. Fully to understand this common superstition of the Indians, it is necessary to know their theory of witchcraft. According to this theory, as it is held, for instance, by the tribes of the Amazonian territory, sickness is brought about by a small arrow-like object, which in most cases has the form of a chonta thorn, and which the sorcerer with certain mysterious gestures and conjuring words sends off from his own mouth against the person he wants to harm. The victim of the " magic shot " feels as if he had been hit by a real arrow.[2] The same belief, according to Dr. Roth, is current in Guiana. The Caribs ascribe children's sickness, and the Arawaks otherwise unaccountable illness in general, and any sharp, sudden, agonizing pains in particular, to an invisible arrow. The latter tribe will often describe it as the Bush Spirit's arrow (*Yawahu-shimara*). Interesting in this connection is the fact that a miniature bow and arrow may be extracted by the *piai* from the patient's body by means of massage and suction.[3] Similar ideas prevail among the Chaco tribes. Thus, the Chorotis call the disease-bringing demon *mohsek ihitek*—*i.e.*, " the arrow-shooting *mohsek* "—an expression which indicates the way in which they fancy the evil spirits operate. Exactly the same idea is held by the Matacos.[4] It is perfectly consistent with the Indian idea of magic that the evil effects of an arrow-shooting demon should be counteracted by using the same sort of weapon as the demon himself. When in ornamental art arrow patterns sometimes occur—for instance, as facial paintings—the underlying idea is the same, namely, that the arrow is a magical charm.[5]

---

[1] Nordenskiöld, *Indianer och hvita*, p. 167.

[2] See Karsten, *Religion of the Jibaro Indians of Eastern Ecuador* (*Boletín de la Academia Nacional de Historia*, vol. iv., nums. 10 and 11), p. 32 *sq.*

[3] Roth, *op. cit.*, p. 361.

[4] Pelleschi, *Otto mesi nel Gran Ciacco*, p. 122.

[5] Various other instances could be mentioned to illustrate the same idea. Thus, among the Tupis it was customary that when a boy was born, certain

The Araucanians in Chile not only had recourse to bleeding in such cases as the above mentioned, but especially practised it before they marched out to battle. Then they scarified the legs and the knees with lancets consisting of pebble-stones because, as they said, the blood made them heavy.[1] It is, however, certain that among the Araucanians, as elsewhere, the scarifications were due to superstitious reasons. They were, in this case, intimately connected with the general Indian idea that in battle evil spirits particularly move about, causing not only bad luck and death, but also the weakness and fatigue which overtake the warrior.

Again, the ancient Payaguas in Paraguay practised bleeding especially at their drinking-feasts. When all were well intoxicated, they pinched each other on the arms, the thighs, and the legs, catching with their fingers so much flesh as they could, whereupon they pierced these parts with a wooden splinter or a sharp fish bone. This operation was repeated from time to time until the close of the day. They also used to prick themselves on various other parts of the

---

magical presents were given him, consisting of the claws of a tiger, of the pounces and feathers of a big bird of prey, and also of a *small bow and arrows* (Thevet, *Cosmographie universelle*, ii. 915). According to de Lery (*Histoire d'un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil*, p. 297), the father gave his newborn son " une petite epée de bois, un petit arc et des petites flèches empennées de plumes de perroquets." See also Soarez de Souza, *Tratado descriptivo do Brazil em* 1587, p. 314. Among the Tupis, moreover, the following peculiar custom prevailed. When a warrior had slain a prisoner with the usual ceremonies, he gave himself one more name, painted himself on the body, scarified himself, etc. He was obliged to lie that same day quietly in a hammock, his people giving him a small bow with an arrow wherewith he passed the time shooting into wax (*The Captivity of Hans Stade of Hesse* [Hakluyt Society], p. 159). This curious custom, observed by the slayer, has sometimes been interpreted as a sort of " couvade." Dr. Friederici, in an article in the *Globus*, has rejected this theory, but his own explanation has no better foundation in facts. Dr. Friederici believes that by his lying in bed, and by his whole behaviour, the man acted the part of a newborn infant in order thus to make himself unrecognizable to the spirit of the slain enemy and escape its attacks. Since the Tupis used to present small bows and arrows to their newborn boys, such were also given to the slayer as playthings (Friederici, " Ueber eine als Couvade gedeutete Wiedergeburtszeremonie bei den Tupi," in *Globus*, Bd. LXXXIX., 1906, pp. 61, 62). However, I think we need not resort to so complicated a theory to explain this custom. The explanation is simple enough. The small bow and arrows with which the warrior shot into wax while lying secluded in his hammock were nothing but *magical charms* with which he tried to keep off or intimidate the revengeful spirit, and the same was, no doubt, the character of the miniature bow and arrows which the Tupis were in the habit of presenting to their newborn infants, since small children are particularly exposed to evil spirits.

[1] Medina, *Los Aborigenes de Chile*, p. 288.

body, as on the tongue and the *membrum virile*. They caught the blood flowing from the tongue with the hand, and rubbed their whole body with it.[1] It is clear that we have here partly the idea that the blood, and especially the blood taken from a delicate limb like the tongue, has a strengthening power, since the blood is the seat of the spirit, and consequently of the strength. But the chief object of this bleeding was, however, the same as in other similar cases. We understand the custom better when we consider that the drinking of intoxicating drinks itself is a sort of purification ceremony. The fermented beer, being sacred, is an antidote against evil spirits, and drives them out from within the body. The Indians, therefore, might easily think to give the impure demons an outlet by bleeding themselves on the occasion of the drinking-feasts. Of the Guamos on the Orinoco it is also stated that they barbarously scarified themselves round the temples and on the front of the head at their drinking-bouts.[2]

Bleeding ceremonies are, however, most often performed at *initiations*, be the object of these initiations to introduce young men and women into the social and sexual life of grown-up people, or to make men capable of exercising their profession as warriors, chiefs, and sorcerers. I have stated already that the significance of the ceremonies performed with girls at puberty is partly to protect them for the time being against certain mysterious spirits, partly to harden them for the future against the invisible foes.[3] Speaking in general terms, we may say that this is the idea underlying all kinds of initiation ceremonies among the Indians. All his life, but particularly on certain critical occasions, man is exposed to the attacks of malignant supernatural beings. It is, therefore, sometimes deemed necessary to enhance by artificial means that natural power of resistance against evil influences which the human body possesses. The human body itself is magical in a higher or lower degree, owing to the spirit which animates it, or rather, the vital and psychical energy with which it is filled, and which is particularly concentrated in such parts as the hair, the nails, the heart, the blood, the saliva, etc. This natural magical power is generally stronger in men than in women, and also stronger in old men than in children and youths. This is the chief reason why the women play only a secondary part in the religious ceremonies, and why the sorcerers as a rule are men of advanced age.

---

[1] Azara, *Voyage dans l'Amérique méridionale*, ii. 135.

[2] Gumilla, *Historia natural de las naciones del Rio Orinoco*, ii. 163.

[3] See *supra*, p. 10.

That woman is especially considered to possess little power of resistance against evil spirits, as pointed out before, is chiefly due to the peculiar nature of her sexual functions, which have given rise to certain superstitious ideas. It is, therefore, easy to understand that among most peoples the trials which the women have to undergo—for instance, at the first menstruation—are more rigorous and detailed than the ceremonies performed with young men at puberty. Scarification or lashing with whips is no doubt the hardest of these trials, but—apart from the tattooing, which will be treated separately—they seem not to be very commonly practised in South America. Where bleeding takes place, it has exactly the same object as the cutting of the hair, which is often done with girls at that important epoch. Thus among the ancient Tupis, when the girls became marriageable, they had their hair cut off and the back scarified, and necklaces of the teeth of wild animals were hung round their neck.[1] The Caribs, on the same occasion, cut off the hair of the girl with a sharp fish bone; thereupon she was placed on a flat stone and her flesh was scarified with sharp agouti teeth from the top of the shoulders down to the back, an oblique cross and several other marks being incised, so that the blood flowed in streams. Ashes were, moreover, put into the wounds, so that the scars never disappeared.[2] Similarly, among the Guarayús the girl was scarified on the breast with an agouti tooth and tattooed. The operation was performed by the sorcerer, and the marks were regarded as outward signs that the girl was marriageable.[3]

Among the Yuracares of Bolivia, when a girl perceives the signs of puberty, the following ceremonies take place. Her father constructs a little hut of palm leaves near the house, and shuts up his daughter in this cabin, so that she cannot see the light. There she remains fasting rigorously for four days. Meantime the mother, assisted by the women of the neighbourhood, has brewed a large quantity of *chicha* (maize-beer). On the morning of the fourth day three hours before the dawn, the girl's father, having arrayed himself in his savage finery, summons all his neighbours, with loud cries.

---

[1] *The Captivity of Hans Stade of Hesse* (Hakluyt Society), p. 144. Thevet, *Cosmographie universelle*, ii. 916. Southey, *History of Brazil*, i. 240.

[2] Lafitau, *Mœurs des sauvages Amériquains*, i. 291.

[3] Cardús, *Las misiones franciscanas*, p. 74.

The damsel is seated on a stone, and every guest in turn cuts off a lock of her hair, and, running away, hides it in the hollow trunk of a tree in the depths of the forest. When they have all done so and seated themselves again gravely in the circle, the girl offers to each of them a calabash full of very strong *chicha*. Before the wassailing begins the various fathers perform a curious operation on the arms of their sons, who are seated beside them. The operator takes a very sharp bone of a monkey, rubs it with a pungent spice, and then, pinching up the skin of his son's arm, he pierces it with the bone through and through, as a surgeon might introduce a seton. This operation he repeats till the young man's arm is riddled with holes at regular intervals from the shoulder to the wrist. Almost all who take part in the festival are covered with these wounds, which the Indians call *culucute*. Having thus prepared themselves to spend a happy day, they drink, play on flutes, sing, and dance till evening. The motive for perforating the arms of the young men is to make them skilful hunters; at each perforation the sufferer is cheered by the promise of another sort of game or fish, which the surgical operation will infallibly procure for him. The same operation is performed on the arms and legs of the girls in order that they may be brave and strong; even the dogs are operated on with the intention of making them run down the game better. For five or six months afterwards the damsel must cover her head with bark and refrain from speaking to men. The Yuracares think that if they did not submit the young girl to this severe ordeal her children would afterwards perish by accidents of various kinds, such as the sting of a serpent, the bite of a jaguar, the fall of a tree, the wound of an arrow, or what not.[1]

Again, the Macusis in Guiana, besides other ceremonies customary on that occasion, used to lash the girl with whips. When about ten days had passed and the girl had taken her first bath, she was obliged to sit, during the night, on a chair or stone where she was lashed by her mother with thin scourges, an operation which she had to endure without showing any signs of pain. At the following menstruation the lashing was again repeated, but not later.[2] The Piaroas on the Orinoco celebrate the same incident with various ceremonies, some of which have been mentioned before. After the girl has been secluded for some days and fasted, some old women bind her eyes and she is taken to a separate place where she is fastened to a pole. No woman, we are told, is allowed to come here, for in that case the evil demon will punish her with madness or death at the following new moon. A number of young men, armed with lashes of cords or fish skin and blowing on a sort of musical instrument, play the main part at the ceremony. They begin to strike the girl with the whips on the thighs, at first only gently, but gradually, as they grow more and more excited through the dance and the music, harder and harder, until the blood flows in streams. Thereafter she is left in the care of one of the assisting men, who tries to cure " the wounds caused by the demon." The last act is the burning of the evil spirit " who tried to invade the girl." A big fire is made round the pole to which the girl had been fastened; the women, invested with large fringed cinctures, start to leap round the fire, holding one another by the waist. They howl, they curse the impure spirit, the cause of the whole evil. The men on their part also yell and chant, and drink a sort of liquor prepared by the parents of the girl.[1]

---

[1] d'Orbigny, *op. cit.*, iii. 205 *sq.*

[2] Schomburgk, *Reisen in British-Guiana*, ii. 316. v. Martius, *Beiträge zur Ethnographie Amerika's*, i. 644.

Similarly, among the Indians of the Uaupés, on the first signs of puberty the girls have to undergo an ordeal. For a month previously they are kept secluded in the house and allowed only a small quantity of bread and water. All relatives and friends of the parents are thereafter assembled, each of them bringing pieces of *sipó*, an elastic climber. The girl is then brought out, perfectly naked, into the midst of them, when each person present gives her five or six severe blows with the *sipó* across the back and breast, till she falls down senseless or, as it sometimes happens, dead. If she recovers, it is repeated four times, at intervals of six hours, and it is considered an offence to the parents not to strike hard. During this time numerous pots of all kinds of meat and fish have been prepared, when the *sipós* are dipped in them and given to her to lick. She is then considered a woman and allowed to eat anything, and is marriageable.[2]

The custom of scarifying girls at puberty appears intelligible when we know that their impurity is believed to be caused by spirits which have passed into the blood, and that these spirits are supposed to leave the organism with the blood drawn. By the scarification, therefore, the girl is naturally purified and her system strengthened.

---

[1] Chaffanjon, *L'Orénoque et le Caura*, p. 214 *sq.*

[2] Wallace, *A Narrative of Travels on the Amazon and Rio Negro*, p. 496.

But the lashing with whips which is practised by some tribes is connected with a special idea to which it is necessary to call attention. *The lashing is by itself*, apart from the bleeding, *a means of purification and conjuration.* The same may, indeed, be said of all kinds of violent bodily exertion to which a person is subject. A great number of peculiar Indian customs get their explanation from this idea. Thus dancing, running, and wrestling have not seldom a ceremonial character, since it is believed that such movements purify the individuals engaged in them from harmful spirits. Especially it is thought that perspiration is a means of ridding the body of physical evils. Among the Tobas, in certain cases of sickness, the patient himself has to dance until he perspires abundantly, the idea professedly being that the disease-spirit will leave the body with the sweat. The same Indians have a ceremonial dance called *nahōre*, the "tiger dance," consisting, among other things, in the men and women who take part in it leaping round in a circle and lashing each other on the loins with a cloth. The lashing takes place to purify the dancers from the feared tiger-demon (the spirit of a dead man reincarnated in a tiger).[1] Among the Lenguas wrestling, engaged in by young men, forms part of the ceremonies performed in honour of boys and girls at puberty.[2] There can be little doubt that in this case the wrestling has a magical character and is believed to aid in the conjuration of the spirits who attack the novices. The same is the object of the ceremonial wrestling which takes place at the great victory-feast of the Jibaro Indians. While the older men and women perform a savage dance round the head of the slain enemy, the young boys, placed in the middle of the ring, engage in wrestling, violently throwing each other to the ground. This wrestling, as the Indians expressly declared, formed part of the feast. The Paressi-Kabiji in southern Brazil make the youths pass through a peculiar ordeal, consisting in a feat of strength, which gives them the right to take part in the *chicha*-festivals. Two big poles, ornamented with large figures, representing, among other things, the principal snake-demon *nukaima*, are fixed in the ground at a certain distance from each other. A third thinner pole is stuck horizontally into holes made in these poles, in the way of a hand-rail. The young men now have to show their strength by passing under the transversal pole and breaking it with their shoulders. It is not until they have succeeded in doing this that they are allowed to drink of the *chicha*.[1] The idea underlying this curious ceremony no doubt is that the hard physical exertion which the youths have to suffer in breaking the pole will purify them from, or harden them against, certain evil spirits of which the snake-demon *nukaima* is the principal and most feared. The figures painted on the poles thus afford an interesting instance of a purely magical ornamentation.

---

[1] Karsten, *The Toba Indians of the Bolivian Gran Chaco* (*Acta Academiæ Aboënsis.* Humaniora, iv.), pp. 68, 73.

[2] Grubb, *op. cit.*, p. 178, figs. facing pp. 180 and 182.

In this connection I may point out that the peculiar marriage ceremony, which has been called the symbolical or mock capture of the bride, as well as the sham fights which not seldom take place at weddings, probably are to be explained from the magical ideas I have just mentioned. Such marriage ceremonies are reported from different parts of the world, but are known to exist among several South American tribes also. Thus, of the Araucanians we are told that their marriage ceremonies consist in nothing more than carrying off the bride by pretended violence, which is considered an essential prerequisite of the nuptials. The husband, in concert with the father, conceals himself with some friends near the place where they know the bride is to pass. As soon as she arrives she is seized and put on horseback behind the bridegroom, notwithstanding her pretended resistance and her shrieks, which are far from being serious. In this manner she is conducted with much noise to the house of her husband, where her relations are assembled and receive the presents agreed upon after having partaken of the nuptial entertainment.[2] Similar customs prevail, for instance, among the Indians of north-west Brazil. The marriage ceremonies of the tribes north of the Yapurá are described by Mr. Whiffen as follows: " The suitor, accompanied by his father and the other relatives, visits the father of the chosen lady. Notice of the arrival having been duly sent, the object of such a formal visit is understood, though not definitely stated beforehand. If the suggestion meets with favour the visitors are welcomed with a feast. Two or three days later the bridegroom's party suddenly kidnap the bride without any show of opposition on the part of her friends and family. She is carried off to the visitor's canoe, and the pair thenceforward may consider themselves to be man and wife without further ceremony." Among the Kurétu, according to the same traveller, " it is a point of honour for the bride to scream and protest while the groom carries her off with mock assistance from his friends."[1] Dr. Koch-Grünberg, speaking of the Kobéua Indians, states that among many sub-tribes ceremonial capture of wives is in vogue. The bride is violently carried off from the maloca with great noise by the bridegroom and his family, after which the two parties sometimes give each other a good flogging. On the following day the parties again meet, when the wedding is celebrated with dancing and drinking.[2] Among the Ipurina on the upper Purús, when the girl's father has given his consent to her marriage she takes to flight, and if the young man succeeds in catching her they are, without further ceremony, regarded as husband and wife.[3] Similarly, among the Lenguas in Paraguay, according to Mr. Grubb, the principal feature of the marriage feast is the pretended stealing of the bride by the bridegroom. At a given time he runs off with his bride, and after going a little way from the village they hide. He is pursued by a company of young men who, however, fail to capture him. On their return, being supposed to be exhausted by their pursuit, they are surrounded by the women, who pour water upon them to cool them.[4]

---

[1] Schmidt, "Reisen in Matto Grosso," in *Zeitschrift f. Ethnologie*, Bd. XLIV., 1912, p. 173.

[2] Molina, *Geographical, Natural, and Civil History of Chili*, ii. 115 *sq*. See also Smith, *Araucanians*, p. 215.

Such ceremonies have generally been explained as survivals from a time when real capture of wives was customary, sometimes also as simply due to coyness, real or assumed, on the part of the girl.[5] Dr. Westermarck points out that " in a warlike tribe the capture of a woman for wife from an alien tribe may be admired as an act of bravery, and therefore playfully imitated by ordinary people at their weddings."[6] For my own part I do not believe that these purely theoretical explanations touch the real ideas underlying the customs mentioned. That the mock capture of the bride and the sham fights should be survivals of real capture of women is all the more improbable as there is absolutely no evidence that the custom of acquiring wives by stealing women has in former times been more common among the Indians than it is nowadays. The true explanation of these marriage ceremonies, at least in South America, must, I believe, be sought in entirely different motives. To understand them we have to take two facts into consideration: first, that marriage is one of those critical occasions in human life when evil spirits are particularly on the alert to do harm, and that the bride is especially exposed to their attacks; secondly, that running, lashing or beating, wrestling, fighting, etc., are regarded as efficacious means of purifying from or warding off evil spirits. The idea is evidently that the violence to which the young woman is subject during the forcible abduction will purify and rid her of the supernatural foes, whereas the fast movement will further help her to escape them. This idea is especially conspicuous in the last instance, referring to the Lenguas. The young couple hurriedly run off and hide themselves to escape the pursuing spirits. These are represented by a company of young men, who, however, of course fail to capture them. The act of pouring water upon them on their return is a sort of conjuration, since the water has a conjuring or purifying power. The joke, like all marriage plays and ceremonies, has originally had much the same serious magical significance as, for instance, the mask-dances.

---

[1] Whiffen, *North-West Amazons*, p. 164. Cp. Wallace, *op. cit.*, p. 497. v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 600.

[2] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, ii. 144.

[3] Ehrenreich, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

[4] Grubb, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

[5] See Westermarch, *History of Human Marriage* (1901), p. 388. Spencer, *Principles of Sociology*, i. 623 *sq.* Similarly, Mr. Crawley explains these customs (the " bride lifting " and the " sexual resistance ") merely as expressions of " woman's shyness, timidity, and modesty, accentuated by the physiological sensibility which resists physical subjugation, chiefly in connection with the act of intercourse. . . . This characteristic has to be neutralized, and is done by a ceremonial use of force, which is half real and half make-believe " (*The Mystic Rose*, pp. 350, 353). This explanation certainly does not touch what is the gist in these ceremonies.

[6] Westermarck, *History of Human Marriage* (1921), ii. 261.

How critical the wedding-night is for the young couple, and especially for the bride, on account of the evil spirits then moving about, will presently be illustrated with further instances.

The short digression which I have made in pointing out these ideas may not, I hope, be regarded as out of place. In the custom of lashing girls at puberty we have, no doubt, ideas of the same kind as in the practices just mentioned. The whips themselves—for instance, that made of the climber *sipó*—are probably supposed to possess some supernatural power which aids in the conjuration of the spirits. One detail is significant in the practice of the Uaupés Indians, namely, to dip the whips, after the operation is finished, in the food which the girl has to eat and then to give them to her to lick. The whips have been in contact with the spirits in the girl's blood and conjured them. When afterwards the girl herself is brought into intimate contact with these things by licking them, she is supposed to become, as it were, immune and hardened against the demons. This is a principle which appears in many Indian conjurations.

The trials which young men have to undergo at puberty are, as a rule, less detailed than the corresponding initiation ceremonies of the girls. However, even the youths are sometimes scarified at the epoch when they are admitted among the full-grown men and initiated in the mysteries of the tribe. Generally this initiation implies that they are thereafter considered properly equipped to marry, to be present at the religious rites and ceremonies from which women and children are excluded, to take part in drinking-bouts, in war expeditions, etc. The Abipones and other Indians of the Guaycurú-group in Chaco not only practised real tattooing and piercing of the lips and the ear-lobes for the insertion of certain ornaments, but also other kinds of bleeding. Thus, they used to scarify the boys even while they were quite small, " in order to make them strong." Some old sorcerers performed these operations, making at certain times incisions upon their feet, legs, arms, tongue, and body with the sharp bone of a ray fish. Before the youths were allowed to take part in the drinking-feasts of the full-grown men they had to pass through an ordeal consisting in four old men piercing their *membrum virile* several times with thorns, an operation which they had to endure without complaining. Thereafter they were admitted among the warriors.[1] Among the Chiriguanos and the Chanés the piercing of the lips was formerly the most important of the ceremonies performed with boys at puberty. These bleeding ceremonies have been examined before.[2] But at least among the Chanés the boys were also scarified on the body on that occasion. When one day had passed after the perforation of the lip, the grandfather of the boy came and made deep incisions upon his whole body in order that he might become a brave warrior and a good hunter.[3] Similarly, among the Yuracares the boys are pierced in the arms at puberty in order that they may become good bowmen.[4]

The Muras on the Rio Madeira celebrate the initiation of their young men at puberty with a feast, at which the taking of a kind of snuff, called *parica*, as well as sanguinary flagellations, play the most prominent part. The feast is not only held at the puberty of boys, but also after the ripening of the crops. The whole tribe is assembled in a large open house, where they are received by the women with *kaschirí* beer and other intoxicating drinks. The men thereafter arrange themselves by pairs and begin to lash each other with long thongs, made of the skin of the tapir or the manate, until the blood flows. This flagellation, far from being an expression of hostility, is considered as an act of love. The bloody operation is continued for several days. Thereupon another curious ceremony takes place: the men, standing two and two, blow *parica*-snuff into each other's nostrils by means of long tubes, and this is done with such a violence that there are cases of men being suffocated by the snuff penetrating into the brain, or falling dead on the spot because of its strong narcotic influence.[1]

---

[1] Lozano, *op. cit.*, p. 90. Charlevoix, *Historia del Paraguay*, i. 137. Cp. Boggiani, *I Caduvei*, p. 295.

[2] See *supra*, p. 113.

[3] Nordenskiöld, *Indianerleben*, p. 211.

[4] Nordenskiöld, *Indianer och hvita*, p. 68.

Similarly, at the great mysteries of the Uaupés Indians which take their name after the principal demon Jurupary, flagellations take place. These mysteries I shall give an account of in detail later on; they are partly held to celebrate the gathering-in of certain important fruits, and partly have the character of initiation ceremonies for youths at puberty. The boys in them lash each other on the body with whips, so that the blood flows.[2]

The scarification or bleeding of boys at puberty is essentially due to the same considerations as the scarification of the girls. The constitution of the youths is certainly not weakened by such physiological processes as is that of the women during menstruation and childbirth; yet even men have to be gradually hardened against evil spirits in order to become capable of dealing with them successfully. Since the blood is the principal seat of life and strength, it is naturally thought that the spirits prefer to attach themselves to this part of the organism. The bleeding purifies the body from impure matter in which the demons are supposed to hide, weakening the whole system. Much the same is the object of the ceremonial snuff-taking in connection with the flagellation among the Muras. The *parica*-

---

[1] Ribeiro de Sampaio, *Diario da Viagem*, p. 21 *sq*. v. Spix and v. Martius, *Reise in Brasilien*, iii. 1074.

[2] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 186, 347 *sq.*; ii. 58. Coudreau, *La France équinoxiale*, ii. 189. As to other similar instances of flagellation of men at puberty or on other occasions, see v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 427, 441, 482, 510, 580 (relating to the Marauhas, Omaguas, Cauixanas, Passé, and Manaos).

snuff is obtained from the seeds of the *parica-uva*, a kind of *Inga*, of which we know that it is by some Brazilian Indians regarded with superstition because the souls of the departed are supposed to transmigrate into this plant. Such plants are generally believed to possess supernatural power. In the same way as the tobacco and the coca, the strong *parica* is regarded as a means of purification, and as an efficacious antidote against evil spirits.

The initiation which would-be war chiefs and sorcerers have to undergo is often particularly severe. Among the Caribs of the mainland, according to Father Gumilla, the chiefs had to pass through three kinds of trial, of which each was harder than the last. The first of these was flagellation by the eldest chief on the whole body so that the blood flowed in streams; the second, that he was placed in his hammock, whereupon a number of poisonous ants were let loose against him and allowed to bite him all over the body. The third trial consisted in his being fumigated over a fire until he was nearly suffocated.[1] Of these ordeals especially the first and the second interest us just now. A statement quoted by Lafitau relating to the same customs of the Caribs is in some points more detailed. Each of the other chiefs, we are told, had to give the novice three heavy strokes on the body with a big whip, made of the roots of the cabbage-tree. The first stroke was directed at the breast, the second at the stomach, and the third at the thighs, and they were applied with such a force that the blood flowed in large drops. This procedure was repeated every day during six weeks. The operation with the ants was carried out by filling a belt and a collar of palm leaves with the poisonous insects and directly applying it to the waist and the neck. Strict fasting was combined with all these ceremonies. A medicine-man had to undergo nearly the same ordeal, with the exception that instead of being lashed with whips he had to perform an exhausting dance. Both before and after the trial the man had to fast, but he was obliged to drain a large cup of tobacco water.[2]

Chiefs and medicine-men are socially on the same level, in so far as both of them ought to be more or less initiated in the magic art in order to be able to exercise their profession with success. It is also a common thing in South America that chiefs are at the same time sorcerers. The chief and the warrior, who are often exposed to supernatural dangers in battle, need no less a strong power of resistance against malicious spirits than the professional sorcerer, and bleeding is one of the means by which this power is supposed to be acquired. Again, the ceremony with the poisonous ants which, among the Caribs, were allowed to bite the would-be chief and sorcerer, and with the tobacco water, which the latter was obliged to drink, had much the same magical character as, for instance, the *parica*-snuff-taking among the Muras. There was a supernatural power in the poison of the ants as well as in the tobacco, which was believed effectually to purify the novices from supernatural evils.[1]

---

[1] Gumilla, *op. cit.*, ii. 92-96.

[2] Lafitau, *op. cit.*, i. 298 *sqq.* Lafitau's authority is an early French writer, Biet, who travelled in French Guiana in 1652.

Among the Caribs of the Antilles, according to de Rochefort, a young man was initiated to become a warrior in the following way. The father, who had previously called the assembly together, made his son sit down on a small seat in the middle of the hut, and delivered a speech to him giving him various instructions. Thereafter he seized a kind of bird of prey, called *manssenis* in the native language, by the feet, and struck his son repeatedly with it until it was dead and its head entirely crushed. After this treatment he scarified his son's whole body with an agouti tooth, and rubbed the wounds with a liquid obtained by soaking the dead bird in a solution of certain grains. The operation caused the patient violent pain, but he had to endure it cheerfully and without displaying the least sign of suffering. Subsequently the heart of the same bird was given him to eat. He had, further, to lie inactive in his bed for some days, strictly fasting. After these ceremonies he was recognized as a warrior and became participant in all rights accompanying that profession.[2]

The only thing to explain, in this account, is the curious ceremony with the bird. Regarding it in the light of other similar ceremonies, we understand that some supernatural or magical power was ascribed to the bird, a power which probably was—as it always seems to be in similar cases—due to the belief that there was a spirit incarnated in it. The novice was brought in close contact with this spirit in different ways, by the lashing, by the solution rubbed into the wounds, and lastly through eating of the bird's heart, in which its spirit was especially seated. In this way, and through the bleeding, his system was strengthened and hardened against the demons to which a warrior is particularly exposed. The fasting, with which such ceremonies nearly always are connected, had for its object to prevent harmful matters from entering into and weakening the organism of the young warrior.

---

[1] Similarly, among the Mauhé in Brazil, when a young man became marriageable, he had to pass through a painful operation, in that he had to put his forearm in a gourd filled with poisonous ants, which were allowed to bite the arm (v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 403). This ceremony had exactly the same purifying object as the one customary among the Caribs.

[2] de Rochefort, *Histoire naturelle et morale des Iles Antilles*, p. 556.

In all these, as in many other cases, the initiation takes place according to the principle *similia similibus curantur* ("like is cured by like"). A spirit, or spiritual power, the harmful effects of which are neutralized by suitable means—that is, by conjurations of one kind or another—is regarded as the best antidote against evil spirits, making man more or less immune against them. The novice must face the evil without being overcome by it, he must fight with the gods and be victorious. Having successfully passed through such a fire ordeal, he is considered to be properly prepared for the future to meet the supernatural foes with which he will have to deal.[1]

Sir James G. Frazer has expressed the opinion that beating or scourging as a religious or ceremonial rite was originally a mode of purification. "It was meant to wipe off and drive away a dangerous contagion, whether personified as demoniacal or not, which was supposed to be adhering physically, though invisibly, to the body of the sufferer."[2] But whereas Sir James Frazer is undoubtedly right thus far, I cannot agree with him when he adds that the "pain inflicted on the person beaten was no more the object of the beating than it is of a surgical operation with us; it was a necessary accident; that was all." In opposition to Sir James Frazer I believe that the pain inflicted forms an essential part of the hardening, which is the gist of the initiation ceremonies we have examined. It is true that asceticism as such is unknown to the savage, and that he will not voluntarily subject himself to pains and privations "unless he believes that some solid temporal advantage is to be gained by so doing."[1] But this is exactly what the Indian expects from the pains connected with the initiations. The heroism with which he subjects himself to them is, as it were, an omen for the future. If he endures them without showing signs of suffering, this means that he will henceforth possess that power of resistance against evil spirits which is necessary in life; if he cannot endure them, this is a presage that he will soon succumb to his natural or supernatural foes. This is often expressly indicated in the accounts of the initiatory rites. Thus, of the Guaranis who formerly inhabited the island of Marajo at the mouth of the Amazon, an ancient writer states that they practised the same custom as is still in vogue among the Bolivian Guaranis, namely, to pierce the lips of their boys. The operation was carried out with a pointed bone, when the boy was five or six years old, and it was believed to make him a great and valiant warrior in the future. But this object was attained only if the boy endured the operation heroically without complaining. On the other hand, if he cried or shed tears on account of the pains, which rarely happened, the older men said that he won't do, that he would always remain a coward, and never become a brave warrior.[2] From this point of view pains deliberately inflicted have, as it were, a magical significance, forming part and parcel of the hardening ceremony.

---

[1] It is interesting to note in this respect that, according to a belief prevailing all over the mountain districts of Peru, persons who have been struck by lightning and survived are endowed with supernatural gifts, and therefore become *yatiri*—*i.e.*, medicine-men or diviners (Bandelier, *The Islands of Titicaca and Koati*, p. 120. Cp. Forbes, *On the Aymara Indians of Bolivia and Peru* [*Jour. Ethnol. Soc. London*, vol. ii., 1870], p. 45. Molina, *Fables and Rites of the Incas*, p. 14). Why is this? Evidently because in the lightning a demon is supposed to operate, and the man who has been struck by lightning without being harmed has shown that he is immune or "hard" against evil spirits, and therefore is believed to possess the qualifications most necessary for becoming a medicine-man.

[2] Frazer, *Balder the Beautiful*, i. 64 *sq.* Idem, *The Scapegoat*, p. 260.

Among the ancient Indians of Mojos in Bolivia, when a man was initiated into the medical profession, the other sorcerers scarified his body with agouti teeth, sharp as razors, in order to make him accustomed to the scarifications which the medicine-men had to make upon themselves on certain occasions.[3] Even independently of real initiations sorcerers sometimes bleed themselves before they proceed to carry out their operation in order to enhance their magical power for the moment. Thus, in ancient Peru there was a class of medicine-men, called *wankakil'i*, who not only were in the habit of fasting and making certain ablutions, but also frequently used to bleed themselves.[4] The Patagonian medicine-man, when called for by the chief to perform his office, adorned himself with white paint, and was bled in the forehead and arms with a sharp bodkin,[5] and when he assisted at the birth of a child he likewise bled himself in the temple, forearm, and leg.[1] Such practices are at bottom due to the same precaution as induces a civilized physician carefully to disinfect his hands before he proceeds to carry out an operation. The savage Indian physician also fears a sort of bacilli; these are the harmful spirits who attach themselves to his blood, weaken his power, and thus are likely to frustrate all his exertions to expel such demons from other people.

---

[1] Frazer, *Balder the Beautiful*, i. 66.

[2] d'Abbeuille, *Histoire de la mission des pères Capucines en l'île de Maragnan*, p. 268.

[3] Lafitau, *op. cit.*, i. 344.

[4] v. Tschudi, *Culturhistorische und sprachliche Beiträge zur Kenntniss der Alten Peru* (*Denkschriften der kaiserl. Akad. der Wissensch.*, Wien, 1891), p. 174

[5] Musters, *At Home with the Patagonians*, p. 80.

There is a special kind of initiation which may be dealt with in this connection—the initiation consisting in *circumcision*. The practice of circumcision—which, as we know, is world-wide and by no means limited to the Jews and other Semitic peoples—has also been found to prevail among a few Indian tribes in Central and South America.[2] Most statements relating to this custom in South America are, however, rather scanty and incomplete. Thus, of the Tecunas on the Amazon, von Spix states, in general terms, that in their forests they practise circumcision upon their children of both sexes.[3] Somewhat more detailed is the account by Fernandez de Souza. " Some of them," he says, " are in the habit of circumcising their sons and daughters, the mothers themselves assisting at this operation. . . . Upon the males they make a small and imperceptible incision on the prepuce, and on the females they cut a small part of the *labia pudendi.*" This practice was connected with the ceremony of name-giving.[4] Of the Paravilhanas, von Martius shortly tells that they circumcised their boys when they had attained their ninth year of age, and that on the same occasion the name of an animal or a plant was given them.[5] Among the Salivas, and other tribes of the Orinoco, circumcision likewise was in vogue. According to Father Gumilla, the children, both male and female, were circumcised on the eighth day, the operation being carried out by a " bloody transfixion," from which it sometimes happened that the babes died. Some nations, living on the tributaries of the Apure, did not, we are told, content themselves with this bleeding of the genitals, but added some scarifications of the whole body and the arms. The latter operation, however, was not performed until the children were about ten or twelve years old, in order that they might be able to stand the heavy loss of blood. To make them insensible to the pain caused by the pointed instrument they were intoxicated for the occasion.[1]

---

[1] Musters, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

[2] As to circumcision among Central-American peoples, see Andree, *Ethnographische Parallelen und Vergleiche*, p. 201 *sq.* Bancroft, *The Native Races*, ii. 278 *sqq.*

[3] v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 445.

[4] Fernandez de Souza, in *Revista trimensal do Instituto historico y geographico do Brasil*, ser. iii., 1848, p. 497.

[5] v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 631.

The most detailed account of a ceremony of circumcision we have in regard to the Conibos on the Rio Ucayali in Peru. The practice seems, however, to have been limited to the girls. According to the German travellers Reich and Stegelmann, as soon as a girl attained to mature age, a great feast was made in which a fermented drink made of manioc roots, called *maschato*, played an important part. After the girl had been made so intoxicated by this beer that she was quite unconscious, the operation began. She was stretched out on three poles of *palo de balsa*, and in the presence of the whole noisy assembly an old experienced woman cut round the *introitus vaginæ* with a knife of bamboo and severed the hymen from the *labia pudendi* so that the clitoris was set quite free. The old sorcerers rubbed some medical herbs into the bleeding parts, and after a while introduced an artificial penis, made of clay, into the vagina of the maiden, the thing being exactly of the same size as the penis of the man betrothed to her. Thereafter she was considered properly prepared to marry, and was given over to her future husband.[2]

Some writers who have dealt with the custom of circumcision among uncivilized peoples have taken great pains to show that it has no religious or mysterious significance whatever. Sometimes it has been explained as due to purely hygienic motives, sometimes again as a means of attracting the opposite sex.[3] As regards the South American peoples, it is hardly necessary to point out how far either of these theories is from the truth. It is, in fact, quite obvious that scarifications or mutilations of the genital parts have exactly the same magical or religious significance as other kinds of ceremonial mutilations.[1] That so critical a part of the body as the organs of generation should, according to primitive belief, be particularly exposed to the invisible enemies savages stand in fear of, is perfectly natural. This belief has, indeed, already been illustrated in connection with the Indian ideas of supernatural birth. As we found, there is always a certain risk of evil spirits entering into the woman's body during the natural sexual intercourse, with the consequence that a deformed monster or twins will be born.[2] The mutilations which girls sometimes have to undergo at the attainment of puberty or before marriage are probably connected with this superstition. The first sexual intercourse of the girl, or the defloration, is especially fraught with danger, because the wound thus arising may serve as an entrance for the evil demons, or because a demon may then operate in some other way. The precaution of the Conivos, to rub the mutilated parts with certain medical herbs, arose from the desire of the Indians to "disinfect" or purify them from these intruders, and the ceremony with the artificial penis, moreover, emphasizes the particular purpose for which these measures were taken.

---

[1] Gumilla, *op. cit.*, i. 118 *sq.*

[2] Reich and Stegelmann, "Bei den Indianern des Urubamba und des Envira," in *Globus*, Bd. LXXXIII., 1903, p. 134. Grandidier, *Voyage dans l'Amérique du Sud*, p. 129.

[3] Thus Herr W. Joest, who, as we have seen, strongly combats the view that body-painting and tattooing have some magical or mysterious significance, also holds that circumcision originally has, among the Jews as among other peoples, been due to purely hygienic considerations. It was only later, when the priests had monopolized the business and surrounded it with a certain mystery, that it gradually received a religious character (Joest, *Tätowiren*, p. 61). Dr. Westermarck, again, regards circumcision, like other kinds of mutilation and disfiguration, as a means of attracting the opposite sex (*The History of Human Marriage* (1921), i. 563).

Garcilasso de la Vega relates that in some provinces of ancient Peru the mothers used to guard their daughters with great care; and when they were sought in marriage they were brought out in public, and in presence of the relations who had made the contract the mothers deflowered them with their own hands.[3] Garcilasso's addition, that this was done to show to all present the proof of the care that had been taken of them, does not indicate the true motive for this practice. The main intention of the ceremony was probably to liberate the husband from the danger connected with the deflowering of the young wife.[4]

---

[1] Mr. Crawley rightly derives the practice of circumcision and artificial hymen-perforation from the savage fear of evil spirits, and the dangers which primitive peoples connect with the sexual act (Crawley, *The Mystic Rose*, pp. 135 *sqq.*, 309).

[2] See *supra*, p. 148.

[3] Garcilasso de la Vega, *Comentarios reales*, bk. i., c. 14. Cp. Cieza de León, *La cronica del Perú* (Primera parte), c. 49.

[4] Even apart from the defloration, the wedding-night is critical because of the evil spirits which are then supposed to be on the alert to do harm. Some curious customs, observed at the wedding, probably depend upon this superstition. Thus, among some tribes in Brazil and Paraguay it has been customary

It is obvious that the customs just mentioned are closely connected with the one commonly known under the name *jus primæ noctis*. Under this term, which is in itself misleading, we may include all cases where another man, and not the bridegroom, has to deflower the bride. Of Brazilian tribes who practise this custom von Spix and von Martius mention the Culinos, the Juris, and the Passé, among whom the *payé* or medicine-man has to spend the first night with the bride, and the Yumanas, among whom this privilege belongs to the chief.[1] Similarly, among the Caribs, the bridegroom received his bride from the hand of the medicine-man, and certainly not as a virgin.[2] Of special interest are the practices in vogue among the Ijca in the mountain regions of Colombia. What could be called a sort of *jus primæ noctis* among these Indians only appears in a special case which I shall presently mention, but their marriage ceremonies in general are highly illustrative of the danger which, according to primitive views, is connected with the first coitus. When marriage is to be consummated the couple, accompanied by an old man, generally a *mama* or medicine-man, go to a small straw hut made for this occasion. Here the first intercourse of the couple takes place in the presence of the *mama*. When they have entered the hut the assisting Indian turns aside and says to the bridegroom: "Take the woman." The bridegroom does not move. Then the *mama* takes a small whip which he has brought with him and slightly flogs him with it. Now the bridegroom obliges the bride to lay herself down on the back, and in doing so she places a number of medicines specially prepared for the purpose under her anus. The assistant now turns his back, incessantly asking: "Ready ?" When the act has taken place all three return to the house, where the couple are ceremonially received by another medicine-man. At last the latter

---

that the bridegroom spent the wedding-night apart from his young wife, either among his tribesmen, standing on guard with his weapons in the hand, or in the house of the father-in-law, by the side of his bride, but without touching her. This is reported, for instance, of the Mundrucús and the Guaycurús (v. Spix and v. Martius, *Reise in Brasilien*, iii. 1313; v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 113). The young husband stands on guard with his weapons in order to be able to keep off the invisible enemies from himself and his bride. For the same reason, among the Canelos Indians, the husband abstains from spending the first night with his bride.

[1] v. Spix and v. Martius, *op. cit.*, iii. 1182, 1189. v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 113, 428, 485.

[2] Waitz, *Anthropologie der Naturvölker*, iii. 382.

prepares the newly-married couple with certain medicines taken from nine different medicine-bags.[1]

Dr. Bolinder expressly states that the ceremonies above described are inspired by fear of the evil supernatural powers which might interfere at the first sexual intercourse. Special precautions are therefore necessary on this critical occasion. The whip with which the medicine-man formally flogs the bridegroom is supposed to frighten away the demons. Similarly, the medicine-bundle placed under the woman is a prophylactic means of keeping off evil influences.[2]

But the Ijca also have another custom of which the expression *jus primæ noctis* may be used with more reason. Certain secret dances are regularly performed in connection with the sowing of the maize, and at these ceremonies a medicine-man plays the main rôle, acting as a kind of *pontifex maximus.* He is assisted by nine women, of whom his own wife is the principal. The eight remaining are young girls who are delivered over to the medicine-man at a tender age by the chief. These girls, who are called *seymaque* (virgins), must remain chaste until full-grown and observe certain rules of diet. As soon as one of these girls becomes marriageable the medicine-man sleeps with her and "prepares" her with certain medicines, after which he designates a husband for her. If anybody seduces the girl before the *mama* has deflowered and "prepared" her, he will die a sudden death.[3] It is not necessary here to enter into an examination of the religious functions of these chaste priestesses, which in some respect form a parallel to the virgins of the Sun among the Incas. What interests us at present is the fact that the defloration of a woman is looked upon as critical, owing to the evil spirits which are then on the alert to do harm, and that a man initiated in the magic art is believed to be able to paralyze this danger. In order to illustrate this Indian view, I may mention the following interesting marriage custom among the Canelos Indians of Ecuador. Here a real "right" to spend the first night with the bride exists, but it is not exercised by a human being, but by the devil. Eight days after the marriage has been arranged the nuptial feast takes place. This feast is considered absolutely necessary, because without it the young husband would soon die owing to the machinations of the *supai* or demon. The first night, however, the young couple cannot spend together; the husband has to pass it not only in another bed, but even in another house. If he spent that night with the bride, it is believed, he would die. The *supai* claims the right to spend that night with her, and the right is voluntarily ceded to him, although there is the danger that the woman, on account of her having had intercourse with the demon, may become pregnant with a monstrous child. However, even the following night is critical, because the demon wants to continue having the woman and is jealous of her husband. The first nuptial embrace, which takes place in the presence of the whole assembly invited to the feast, is therefore arranged under especial precautions. The object of these is to keep off the molesting demon and to prevent twins from being the first birth of the bride, in which case the *supai* is regarded as the father of the second child. Generally the demon is believed to continue molesting the woman for some time, visiting her at night in dream and trying to have intercourse with her. Then a medicine-man is summoned, who gives the woman a certain medicine prepared from a rind called *petun cara*. This medicine is supposed to kill the demon and to rid the woman from his nightly visits.[1]

---

[1] Bolinder, *Ijca-indianernas kultur*, pp. 251-252.

[2] Bolinder, *op. cit.*, p. 253 *sqq.*

[3] Bolinder, *op. cit.*, p. 281.

The following custom, prevailing among the Tapuyas, also in its way illustrates the danger which, according to Indian idea, is connected with defloration. If a girl is marriageable, and has not been demanded in marriage, her mother paints her with red paint under the eyes, and takes her to the chief explaining what she desires. The chief makes the damsel sit down on a bench by his side. Pretending to play the part of a doctor, he warms his hands at the fire and rubs his body with them. Thereupon he fumigates the girl with tobacco smoke and deflowers her (pene juvenculæ pudenda ferit); "si autem," the author adds, "sanguinem eliciat hunc delingit, atque hoc imprimis honorificum putant."[2]

The above facts suggest the real reason why among some tribes custom does not allow the bridegroom himself to spend the first night with his bride or to deflower her. Since the defloration of the young wife is regarded as particularly fraught with danger, it is not difficult to understand why this delicate operation should be entrusted to a person who, on account of his profession, is supposed to be able to do it with success. The sorcerer knows how to deal with the evil spirits; he therefore knows how to deflower the girl without her being supernaturally harmed, and without her husband being harmed afterwards. If among some tribes it is the chief and not the medicine-man that performs this duty, this is not at variance with my explanation. The Indian chiefs are generally endowed with magical gifts and, as just pointed out, are among many tribes medicine-men as well. Again, when Garcilasso de la Vega states that among the ancient Mantas it was customary that the bride at first yielded herself to the relatives and friends of the bridegroom,[1] this custom was essentially a proof of friendship on their part. The relatives and friends undertook the risky operation instead of the bridegroom, who of course was more exposed to supernatural dangers.

---

[1] Karsten, *Contributions to the Sociology of the Indian Tribes of Ecuador* (*Acta Academiæ Aboënsis.* Humaniora, i: 3, 1920), p. 72 *sq.*

[2] Laët, *Guilielmi Pisonis de Medicina Brasilensi, libri quatuor . . . cum appendice de Tapuyis et Chilensibus*, p. 281.

The old theory on the *jus primæ noctis*, according to which it is merely a part of the nuptial entertainments, a kind of hospitality, or a war-right exercised by the captors of the woman, is therefore no doubt erroneous. The misunderstanding is embodied in the very name of the custom: it is not to be regarded as a *right* or privilege which the chief or medicine-man enjoys, but rather as a *duty* which they perform on account of the official position they hold in the community.

We have still to pay attention to an important class of scarifications and mutilations, namely, those which take place at *mourning*. Thus, among the Jahgans of Tierra del Fuego the relatives of the dead, both men and women, lacerate their face with sharp pieces of shells and cut their hair on the top of the head.[2] Similarly, the Onas not only manifest their sorrow through wailing and cutting of the hair, but also through scarifying their flesh with pieces of glass or bones. They inflict wounds upon their breast and their arms which sometimes are half a centimetre deep.[3] Of the Karayá Dr. Ehrenreich likewise tells that the mourners scarify themselves and cut their hair,[4] and the same custom Professor von den Steinen found among the Bororó.[1] Among the Guarayús, when somebody dies, the relations mourn for him for some time; they wash themselves with a solution made of the bark of a tree called *ibiraa*, they paint themselves black and scarify their body. "All this they do," we are told, "in order to rid themselves of the malady from which the deceased had suffered, and to live healthily."[2]

---

[1] Garcilasso de la Vega, *op. cit.*, bk. ix., c. 8.

[2] Hyades and Deniker, *Mission scientifique de Cap Horn*, vol. vii. *Anthropologie, Ethnologie*, p. 379. Bove, *Patagonia, Terra del Fuoco*, p. 138.

[3] Gallardo, *Los Onas*, p. 317. Cojazzi, *Gli Indii dell' Arcipelago Fueghino*, p. 72.

[4] Ehrenreich, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

As pointed out in the beginning of this chapter, such mourning rites cannot be explained merely as forms of self-torture, by which angry ghosts are placated. They are purification ceremonies of exactly the same character as the other ceremonial mutilations which have hitherto been examined. The last instance, referring to the Guarayús, is especially significant. It has generally been assumed that all rites performed after a death are inspired by fear of the ghost of the dead, to which savages almost invariably ascribe all sorts of malevolent intentions. However, it has never been satisfactorily explained why persons who in their lifetime have, perhaps, been honoured and loved are nevertheless after death feared as evil demons, who are trying to inflict all sorts of evils upon the surviving relatives. Many mourning customs appear more intelligible when we know that the spirit against whom the precautions are taken, in most cases, is not immediately the soul of the dead, but *the disease-demon who caused death by entering into the body of the patient.* The demon, it is believed, will probably not content himself with one victim, but is likely to take away other people also, the nearest relatives of the deceased being especially endangered. It is true that there is also often the belief that the disease-spirit, having obtained possession of a person and caused his death, will at the same time lay hold of his soul as well, and change him altogether into an evil demon, whatever may have been his character in life; so that, in many cases, there is practically no difference between the death-bringing demon and the spirit of the dead. This seems, in fact, to be the rule for instance with the souls of the medicine-men or sorcerers, who are nearly always highly feared. But the said belief, anyhow, will help us to get a better understanding of the mourning practices. The spirit from which the mourners try to purify their organism through bleeding themselves is, thus, the disease- and death-spirit, or the contagion or infection of death personified, and sometimes identified with the soul of the departed.

---

[1] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 505.

[2] Cardús, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

That it is always a *personal* being, and not any impersonal magical influence arising from the dead body, that the Indians fear, is clear from many particular Indian customs practised at mourning.

Just as girls are sometimes scourged at puberty, and men on the occasion when they are initiated to become warriors and medicine-men, so mourners have, among some tribes, to subject themselves to bloody flagellations. This is, for instance, the treatment a widow has to undergo among the Guahivos in Venezuela before she is allowed to marry again. The ceremony takes place on the anniversary of the husband's death. The widow is seated upon his tomb, which has been made within the hut, a cloth with which she has covered her face for the occasion is removed, and she holds her hands lifted over the head. A man, the future husband, approaches and strikes her on the bosom with scourges; other men lash her on the shoulders. She receives all these flagellations without complaint. Thereafter the new husband is, in his turn, scourged in the same way.[1]

That these scourging ceremonies have for their object to counteract or neutralize the evil influences arising from the spirit of the late husband, is beyond doubt. When widows are bound to observe sexual abstinence for some time after the death of their husband and prohibited from immediately marrying again, this restriction is mostly due to superstitious fear. At the sexual intercourse with the new man the jealous spirit of the former husband may operate, with the consequence that a sickly child or a demonic being will be born.[2] As we find among the Guahivos, not only the widow but also her future husband has to be prepared against the feared spirit by scourging.

One of the most famous mourning or funeral ceremonies in South America is the *mariquarri* dance of the Arawaks in Guiana. This ceremony has been described by many writers, but the account given by the Rev. W. H. Brett is the most detailed. The principal feature in the *mariquarri* dance is the lashing of the guests, arriving at the funeral, with long whips. At a feast which the Rev. W. H. Brett witnessed, the young men and boys of the village were ranged in two parallel rows, facing each other, each holding in his right hand the *mariquarri*, from which the dance takes its name. This is a whip made of the silk grass (*Bromelia caratas*), more than three feet long, and capable of giving a severe cut. They waved these whips in their hand as they danced, uttering alternate cries, which resembled the note of a certain bird often heard in these forests. At some little distance from the dancers were couples of men lashing each other on the legs. After a few lashes they drank *paiwari* together and returned to the main body of the dancers, from which fresh couples were continually falling out to engage in the same contest. "Nothing," says the Rev. W. H. Brett, "could exceed the good humour with which these proceedings were carried on."

---

[1] Crevaux, *op. cit.*, p. 548.

[2] Among the Jibaros in Ecuador I found this idea particularly prevailing. See my *Contributions to the Sociology of the Indian Tribes of Ecuador* (*op. cit.*, i: 3, 1920), p. 75.

The dance was given in honour of a deceased female, who had been buried in the house. On her grave were placed two bundles containing the refuse of the silk grass of which the whips were made, which had been carefully preserved. There were also two pieces of wood rudely carved to resemble birds, and two others intended to represent infants. The articles were then carried in procession to a hole previously dug in the earth, and were buried there. Two or three men, appointed for the purpose, drew forth their long knives, and rushing in among the dancers snatched the whips from them, cut off the lashes, and buried them with the other articles. It seemed to be a point of etiquette not to resign the whip without a struggle, and while the one party were snatching and cutting, the others were leaping and throwing somersaults to avoid them, and it was surprising that none of them received any injury amid the confusion.[1]

The ceremonies just described present many features characteristic of the Indian conjurations. Their aim was essentially to purify the mourners from the death-spirit and magically to influence the soul of the deceased woman. The soul was believed to have transmigrated into the bird, the image of which was carried in the procession and the cry of which the dancers imitated during the dance. The images representing infants probably had reference to the woman's future reincarnation or rebirth in human form. The lashing with the whips was a means of conjuring the death-spirit and of hardening the survivors against it, according to principles which have already been pointed out. But the whips, which had served as magical instruments and been in contact with the spirit in the blood of the mourners, had thereby been infected or tabooed. Hence they were afterwards cut off and buried together with the images which also contained the spirit of the dead woman. Again, the act of struggling with which the men appointed for the purpose took possession of the whips in order to cut and bury them, was not accidental: the struggle was supposed to aid in the purification from the dangerous spirit. We thus here have one more interesting example of a magical or ceremonial wrestling.

---

[1] Brett, *The Indian Tribes of Guiana*, pp. 154-156. Schomburgk, *op. cit.*, ii. 458. v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 694.

As to mutilations of the body practised at mourning, the custom of the ancient Charruas and Minuanes in Uruguay, described by Azara, is of particular interest. Among the Charruas, when the dead man was a father, a husband, or an adult brother, the daughters, the widow, and the sisters, if they were full-grown, each had one joint cut off from their fingers; this was repeated for every relation of the like character who died, the primary amputation being from the little finger. Besides this, they thrust the knife or lance of the deceased various times through their arms, their bosom, and their flanks, from the waist upwards. "I have seen them passing two months secluded in their huts," says Azara, "where they do nothing but wail, abstaining from taking any nourishment. I have not seen one single adult woman who had all her fingers complete, and who did not wear cicatrices after the wounds inflicted by the lance." Again, the adult sons observed the following custom after the death of their father. They hid for two days, entirely naked, in their hut without taking any food. Thereafter, towards the evening, they addressed another Indian, who performed the following operation upon them. He pinched the flesh on the arm of the patient, and passed a thorn, long as the palm, all through it so that the extremities stuck out on each side. This operation was repeated on different parts of the arm. The first thorn was fixed to the wrist, and the others successively, with a distance of one inch, along the outside of the arm, up to the shoulders, and even fixed to these. The mourners thereafter went out in the wood, where they passed the night without fearing the jaguars or other wild beasts, being persuaded that they would take flight when they saw them arranged in this way.[1]

Similar customs were practised by the Minuanes, inasmuch as a woman at the death of her husband cut off one of her finger-joints. Widows also used to cut off the end of their hair, the rest serving to cover the face.[2]

---

[1] Azara, *Voyage dans l'Amérique méridionale*, ii. 25-27. d'Orbigny, *L'homme Américain*, ii. 90 *sq.*

[2] Azara, *op. cit.*, ii. 34.

As for the significance of these customs, we have first of all to explain the mutilation of the fingers. Is this mutilation, as, for instance, Sir E. B. Tylor believes,[1] to be regarded as a sacrifice to the spirit of the dead, which, according to the principle *pars pro toto*, represents the whole man? I think certainly not. The true explanation must be sought in the same considerations as have led to other bleeding rites at mourning. The principal thing is here also to get rid of the dangerous death-demon which has entered into the organism, and more particularly into that part which is amputated. The reason for cutting off the finger-joints among the Charruas will, I think, seem clear when we compare this practice with an analogous mourning custom of the Tobas, which I have mentioned before in connection with the Indian superstitions relating to nails.[2] It was formerly customary among the Tobas that, when a woman died, her eldest son cut off one of his nails and hung it at the neck of a dog, which carried it away. This was done because it was believed that the spirit of the dead woman would enter her son through the nail and kill him in the shape of a tiger, into which it would transform itself. The dog which carried the nail away would meet some other tribesman into whom the soul would pass, but it would do him no harm, since the spirits of the dead are harmful only to the nearest relatives.

We know that the Charruas, who are now extinct, were closely related to the Tobas, and the close similarity between their mourning customs, just described, is also conspicuous. The Tobas cut off the nail because the nail, being, like the hair, the seat of the soul, is supposed to be a particularly vulnerable point through which, therefore, evil spirits easily may get hold of man. The same idea may have been present to the mind of the Charruas; the only difference was that they did not content themselves with cutting off the nail only, but severed the whole joint of the finger. From Azara's description it appears that it was always the last joint of each finger—*i.e.*, the joint with the nail—which was thus cut off.

That the practice of severing limbs into which evil spirits are supposed to have entered is familiar to the Indians, also appears from a custom of some tribes of the Orinoco, related by Gumilla. If an Indian, says the Father, in searching for armadillos, is bitten in the hand by a snake, his comrades cut the hand off; if he is alone, he himself strikes it off with a club. If he is bitten in the arm, the arm is cut off, etc.[1] The practice is exactly analogous with the finger-cutting of the Charruas at mourning, for the Indians believe that, with the snake's poison, an evil spirit passes into the blood.

---

[1] Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, ii. 365.

[2] See *supra*, p. 50

Since, on the whole, those limbs which are most useful and necessary to man are most exposed to the invisible molesters, it is easy to understand, for instance, why bleeding ceremonies are so often practised on the arms. The other mourning custom of the Charruas, practised by the sons of the deceased, may be explained from this point of view. First, we have here the idea that the bleeding purified the arm from the feared demon; second, the thorns which were passed through the flesh, along the outside of the arm, acted as charms, inasmuch as they kept off the evil spirits from the arm and struck them with terror. The principle is the same as appears in the case of certain magical ornaments inserted into the ear-lobes, the lips, and the septum of the nose. The detail in the statement that the Charrua youths, having their arms prepared in this way, did not fear jaguars or other wild beasts in the forest is significant. Since the dead are frequently believed to be changed into wild animals, and particularly into jaguars, the mourners had a special reason to fear such beasts; but the long thorns fixed to the arm afforded an efficacious protection against them.

Lastly, we have to examine the custom of *tattooing*, which, as we easily find, is closely connected with the ceremonial mutilations hitherto dealt with. After the previous statements it is not necessary to enter into a refutation of those writers who deny the tattooing any deeper significance, and hold it to be merely a decoration and a means of attracting the opposite sex. Such intentions may have played a secondary part in the custom, but they never account for its true origin. Even in our own days most Indians are, no doubt, aware that tattooing is in its essence a religious custom, believing that the indelible marks and patterns which they wear in the face or on other parts of the body will protect them against all sorts of evil influences.

In the custom of tattooing there are three things to distinguish, all of which are magical in nature: first, the scarification or bleeding itself; second, the matter (soot, ashes, the juice of a tree, etc.) put into the wounds; and third, the patterns and marks incised, which remain when the wounds have been healed. As to the last-mentioned, the patterns, we need not dwell upon this side of tattooing here, since I shall treat of it at length in a subsequent chapter. The animal figures and geometrical lines which are incised in the face or on the body, as I shall show, are based upon a magic of their own, which combines with the magic of the bleeding and the " disinfecting " matter rubbed into the wounds, to keep off evil spirits from the person tattooed.

---

[1] Gumilla, *op. cit.*, ii. 268.

Professor von den Steinen, having pointed out the great importance the Xingú tribes ascribed to scarifications of the body, regarding them as a sort of universal remedy, rightly expresses the view that, from the custom of scarifying his body, the Indian has gradually been led to tattooing, by the habit of putting soot or the juice of certain trees into the wounds inflicted. But when he says that this is done simply to stop the blood or to heighten or modify the irritation as occasion requires,[1] his explanation does not touch the gist of this ceremony. With regard to the matter which is put into the incisions, we may say that some mysterious supernatural efficacy is always ascribed to it, which is supposed to purify the blood from the demons polluting it, and to strengthen the organism of the patient. At least such ideas were originally connected with this practice.

That the custom of tattooing is intimately connected with that of making scars and incisions upon the body, may also be inferred from certain statements relating to the Guiana Indians. In Surinam, among both the Ojanas and the Trios, two Carib tribes, it is, according to de Goeje, customary to slash arms and legs with a knife, and the scars may be rubbed with turalla (*Caladium* bulb). An Ojana told de Goeje that he cut his arm in order to be able to shoot the quatta monkey well. A Trio slashed his arm and forearm and rubbed earth into it to become a good hunter; another cut his thigh in order to become a strong mountain climber. Some women also had on the outer side of the thigh scars from wounds inflicted to make themselves strong.[2]

Among all South American Indians tattooing is more commonly practised by the female sex than by the male. As to the Chaco tribes, the rule seems to be that only women are tattooed, whereas the men content themselves with facial paintings. The reasons for this are clear from what has been stated before as to the small power of resistance women are supposed to possess against evil spirits, which makes it necessary to eke it out by artificial means. It is also significant that the tattooing of the girls is generally undertaken at the critical epoch of their life when they attain puberty. In Chaco this has been the case, for instance, with the Tobas, the Abipones, and other tribes belonging to the great Guaycurú-group.[1] Dobrizhoffer gives a detailed description of the ceremony of tattooing among the Abipones, which may be said to be typical for all Chaco tribes, indeed, for most South American Indians. The Abiponian women, says the Father, not content with the marks common to both sexes, have their face, breast, and arms covered with black figures of various shapes, so that they present the appearance of a Turkish carpet. As soon as a young woman is of age to be married she is ordered to be marked according to custom. She reclines her head upon the lap of an old woman and is pricked. Thorns are used for a pencil, and ashes mixed with blood for paint. The old woman, sticking the points of the thorns deep into the flesh, describes various figures till the whole face streams with blood. The first day she is sent home with her face half pricked with the thorns, and is recalled the next, and the next after that, to have the rest of her face, the breast, and the arms pricked in like manner. Meantime she is shut up for several days in her father's tent and wrapped in a hide that she may receive no injury from the cold air. Carefully abstaining from meat, fish, and some other sorts of food, she feeds upon nothing but a little fruit which grows upon brambles and conduces much towards cooling the blood.[2]

---

[1] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

[2] de Goeje, *Beiträge zur Völkerkunde von Surinam* (*Intern. Archiv f. Ethnographie*, Bd. XIX., Heft. i.-ii., 1908), p. 21. See also Roth, *op. cit.*, p. 278.

The Matacos and the Chorotis perform tattooing much in the same way, the women being always and the men sometimes tattooed. The skin is pricked with a cactus thorn so that the blood flows, whereupon soot mixed with saliva is rubbed into the wounds. The operation is generally carried out by an old woman. Among these tribes the tattooing begins even before the attainment of puberty, when the girl is about six or seven years old, the forehead being the part which is first marked. Gradually, in the course of the following years, new marks—small circles, crosses, half-moons, and lines—are added, and when the girl is marriageable nearly the whole face is covered with them.

---

[1] d'Orbigny, *L'homme Américain*, ii. 233. Boggiani, *Compendio de etnografia Paraguaya*, p. 18. Cardús, *Las misiones franciscanas*, p. 262. Azara, *Voyage dans l'Amérique méridionale*, ii. 128.

[2] Dobrizhoffer, *An Account of the Abipones*, ii. 20 *sq.*

That tattooing is done by means of soot or ashes is certainly not an accident. From different parts of South America we hear of ashes playing a part in the superstition of the natives, being regarded as a prophylactic against evil spirits,[1] and similarly the power of warding off malign influences which is ascribed to soot and charcoal manifests itself, for instance, in the ceremonial blackening of the face on certain occasions. The supernatural efficacy of these matters probably is due to their connection with fire, which itself is regarded as a radical means of purification. The custom of mixing the ashes and the soot with blood or saliva is further testimony in the same direction, for magical virtues are commonly ascribed both to the blood and the saliva.

The Choroti women seemed to be still quite aware of the religious significance of their tattooings, which were especially regarded as protections against disease. Since a woman lacking this protection naturally would be shunned by the men, it is easy to understand that tattooing may secondarily become in a way a means of sexual attraction. That this, however, cannot have been its original object, may at once be inferred from the fact that among the Chorotis all women are tattooed much in the same way. In a community where all women wear the same decorations no particular woman can hope thereby to gain precedence over her sisters in the favour of the men. Moreover, among the Chorotis it is the women who play the active part in contracting marriages, and being, as they are, much fewer in number than the men, they have no need of special " means of attraction " to acquire husbands.

---

[1] Thus, for instance, Dobrizhoffer tells that the Abipones used to throw ashes in the path of a whirlwind " that it might be satisfied with food " (Dobrizhoffer, *op. cit.*, ii. 86). We may rather say that it was done to drive away the spirit of the whirlwind. It is a common belief among the Chaco Indians that whirlwinds are the passing of spirits (See Grubb, *An Unknown People in an Unknown Land*, p. 139). In a myth of the Karayá, recorded by Dr. Ehrenreich, we hear of a woman who escaped some evil spirits pursuing her by throwing ashes, charcoal, and salt behind her during her flight (Ehrenreich, *Mythen und Legenden der südamerikanischen Urvölker*, p. 87). The ancient Tupis, at the ceremonial killing of prisoners of war, used to paint their bodies white with ashes (*The Captivity of Hans Stade of Hesse* [Hakluyt Society], p. 158). The Fuegian medicine-man, when he proceeds to exercise his profession, covers his head with ashes (Bove, *Patagonia, Terra del Fuoco*, p. 134). The idea that evil spirits may be expelled by throwing ashes after them is also connected with the fact that ashes are a natural disinfectant. Ashes are therefore commonly used by the Indians for stuffing birds and animals.

In Dobrizhoffer's description we also notice the *seclusion* of the girl in connection with the tattooing and the *fasting* to which she submits herself. Seclusion and fasting generally in South America form part and parcel of religious initiations, and would certainly not be resorted to at tattooing if its object were merely to beautify the face.

The Tupis not only scarified the back of girls at the first menstruation, but, moreover, put a colouring matter—burnt gum, the " copal " of the *jotoba* tree, or the brown-coloured juice of the *genipapo* fruit—into the incisions, so that the scars never disappeared.[1] The same we are told of the Guarayús, who put powdered charcoal into the wounds inflicted on the girl's breast, in order that the lines may " appear well and never be effaced." Father Cardús adds that the marks were " like a sign of prostitution ";[2] we may rather say that they—besides their having magical significance—served as outward signs that the girl was marriageable. Similarly, among the Caribs the scarification of the girl was followed by real tattooing, the scarified parts being rubbed with ashes of burnt pumpkin. This operation, we are told, caused no less pain than if gunpowder or saltpetre had been rubbed into the wounds, and the marks became ineffaceable.[3]

The juice of the *genipapo* fruit, which the Tupis sometimes applied to the wounds at tattooing, is also, as we have seen, commonly used for painting the body. The part which the *genipapo*, like the *urucú*, plays in native superstition is no doubt due to certain magical virtues ascribed to these plants.

A significant instance of a magical tattooing may also be mentioned with regard to the Mauhé Indians. During pregnancy many women are in the habit of bleeding their arms and legs with the pointed beak of a toucan or the tooth of a rodent, and into the wounds inflicted they rub the ashes of the burnt *genipapo* fruit.[4] Since pregnancy is always believed to put a woman into a critical condition, there is no doubt that the object of the tattooing is to protect her against certain mysterious dangers to which she is exposed at that period.

---

[1] *The Captivity of Hans Stade of Hesse* (Hakluyt Society), p. 144 (also note 1).

[2] Cardús, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

[3] Lafitau, *op. cit.*, i. 291.

[4] v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 402 *sq.*

Tattooing also occurs among the Onas, being applied to the interior part of the arm. Here a line of small incisions are made, charcoal being used as colouring matter. When the wounds are cicatrized some blue points remain "which are supposed to have a marvellous effect." They are, moreover, used to distinguish males of the same family.[1]

Gallardo's statement gives us to understand that the tattooing of the Onas first of all has a magical significance.

Tattooing is also practised as a mourning custom and after the slaying of an enemy, in which latter case it is regarded as a mark of distinction and a token of nobility. The warlike Tupis afford the best example of this custom. Some of the ceremonies with which they used to kill their captives have already been mentioned.[2] After the executioner had slain the victim he had to observe various rules of conduct—lie down in his bed, keep quiet, fast, etc. Moreover, incisions were made in his breast, arms, and legs, and other parts of his body with a saw made of the teeth of an animal. Charcoal and some other black colouring matter was rubbed into the wounds, which left ineffaceable scars, so artistically arranged that they presented the appearance of a tightly-fitting garment. It was believed that he would die if he did not thus draw blood from his own body after slaughtering the captive.[3]

We know that all these precautions were taken in order to protect the slayer against the revengeful soul of the slain enemy. There is little doubt that the scarification and the tattooing were undertaken with the same view, or, more strictly speaking, to purify or disinfect the blood of the slayer from the spirit attacking him, and to make the magical protection permanent.

Father Yves d'Evreux makes a statement relating to the tattooing of the ancient Brazilians which deserves to be mentioned in this connection. All Brazilian Indians, he says, are in the habit of scarifying and cutting their body, "which they do with the same ease as tailors cut their suitings here." This is done both by men and by women, with the difference that the men make incisions upon the whole body, whereas women only scarify themselves from the navel to the thighs. The operation is carried out with a sharp agouti tooth, and ashes of burnt gum are afterwards applied to the wounds. On inquiry, the natives gave the following reasons for practising this custom: first, that they did it in order to keep always in memory the grief they felt because of the death of their relatives who had fallen into the hands of their enemies; second, it was a sort of protestation which they made to take vengeance upon their enemies; they wanted to signify through this painful operation that they would not spare either their blood or their life in revenging themselves. Consequently, the more they were marked, the more they were esteemed brave and of great courage.[1]

---

[1] Gallardo, *Los Onas*, p. 148.

[2] See *supra*, p. 116.

[3] de Lery, *Histoire d'un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil*, p. 248. Gottfriedt, *Neue Welt und Amerikanische Historien*, p. 146. *The Captivity of Hans Stade of Hesse* (Hakluyt Society), p. 159.

Now this statement, of course, does not contain the whole truth, for the tattooed marks are never merely visible signs of the desire of the Indians to take revenge on their enemies, but certainly have a more practical object. We know that just as it is, from the Indian's point of view, the most cruel of all lots to fall into the hands of one's enemies, and to be killed and eaten by them, so it is the most sacred duty incumbent on the surviving relatives to take revenge for this violation. As long as the dead remains unavenged, his wrath may naturally turn against the neglectful and indifferent relatives themselves, who are thus endangered. The tattooing marks which Father Yves d'Evreux speaks of, therefore, had no doubt originally been magical protections for the relatives of the slain enemy, which, moreover, always reminded them of their duty to revenge his death.

Indelible scars and marks are not only made upon the body by putting some colouring matter into the wounds inflicted, but also without the latter operation. We have thus reason to speak of a *scar-tattooing*, in which the mere cicatrices play much the same part as do in real tattooing the black marks and figures. Thus, Dr. Nordenskiöld states of the Yuracare Indians, that the only tattooings they display are simple scars which are not filled with soot. The scars are small points or spots which are applied two and two along the outside of the arm from the wrists to the shoulders.[2] Among the Conibos in Peru, according to the German traveller Reich, young men frequently had the skull full of long deep scars. The Indians explained with great pride and satisfaction that during their *maschato* drinking-feasts they are wont to seize one another, and inflict upon each other's heads as many cuts as possible.[1] In Chaco the natives are equally proud of the scars which they wear on different parts of the body, be it that these scars are self-inflicted—since they are in the habit of often bleeding themselves on the arms and the legs to enhance their muscular strength—or acquired by accident. The Indians showed with apparent satisfaction even those cicatrices which, for instance, the *palometa* fishes had inflicted upon them with their sharp teeth on bathing in the river.

---

[1] Yves d'Evreux, *Voyage dans le Nord du Brésil*, p. 43 *sq.*

[2] Nordenskiöld, *Indianer och hvita*, p. 68, fig. 45.

It is quite evident that, according to the Indian idea, not only the simple bleeding purifies the body from impure matters and strengthens the limbs, but that the very scars which remain after the operation possess some mysterious power to keep off evil influences, a power which is much the same as that ascribed to real tattooing marks. This Indian view is especially conspicuous with regard to an operation which the whites sometimes perform upon Indians who have come in contact with the Christian civilization—vaccination. The Christians probably have no remedy which the natives understand so well as this, and they therefore, as a rule, submit to the vaccine inoculation without difficulty, in fact, with pleasure. The small indelible marks which remain are regarded with wonder and admiration, and it is perfectly understood that they are, as it were, a warranty that the terrible disease will not befall them.

Sufficient evidence has been adduced to show that the kind of rites called ceremonial mutilations, including such practices as circumcision, scarification, tattooing, etc., are essentially of a religious or magical origin. This result is by no means surprising, considering that in recent years the insight into the enormous influence that magical beliefs have exerted upon the social customs of the lower races has grown more and more among anthropologists. Mr. Crawley has, I believe, been one of the first to pave the way towards a right understanding of the primitive ornaments, as far as they are connected with bloody operations of some kind, when he points out that it is erroneous to attribute such practices as tattooing, boring, and scarification to the desire for ornaments, and that " when we find that the mouth and lips, the teeth, nose, eyes, ears, and genital organs are subject to such processes, we may infer that the object is to secure the safety of these sense-organs by what is practically a permanent amulet or charm."[1] An American writer, Mr. Finck, has expressed the same opinion in stating that when we subject the primitive custom of "ornamentation" to a critical examination we find in nearly every case that it is either not at all, or only indirectly, connected with the relations of the sexes. The remarks of travellers regarding the addiction of savages to personal "ornamentation" are merely "the unwarranted assumptions of superficial observers, who, ignorant of the real reasons why the lower races paint, tattoo, or otherwise 'adorn' themselves, recklessly inferred that they did so to make themselves beautiful."[2] The reader will easily find that this statement perfectly agrees with the view reached by me during the years I have spent in studying this particular subject in South America.

---

[1] Reich and Stegelmann, "Bei den Indianern des Urubamba und des Envira," in *Globus*, Bd. LXXXIII., p. 134 *sq.*

As to tattooing, we may now take it as certain that, in the part of the world also where this custom has been most commonly practised, namely, in the South Sea Islands, it has, like the ornamental art in general, had a purely religious origin.[3] In South America, where the custom exists in a more primitive form, we can clearly show its intimate connection with other scarification and bleeding practices, and thus make out its obvious magical significance.

Dr. Westermarck, who, as we have seen, defends the old view according to which not only tattooing but also circumcision and similar mutilations are in a large measure "ornaments" in the civilized sense of the word and "means of attraction," observes that "the sexual impulse is even more primitive than the belief in mysterious or supernatural forces and agents."[4] To this I beg to answer that, as far as we can judge, superstition is, however, as old as mankind and, moreover—what is the decisive point—that, at least with the Indians, *superstition is by far stronger than even the sexual impulse.* This is abundantly proved by the numerous cases where the Indians abstain, for longer or shorter periods, from sexual intercourse for purely superstitious reasons. On the whole, it seems to me evident that the said theory greatly exaggerates the rôle that erotic motives play in the social life of the lower races; at any rate, this holds true with regard to the Indians. The perfectly natural way in which they look upon the sexual life and sexual relations makes it in itself highly improbable that they should have recourse to scarifications and mutilations of the genital organs or of other parts of the body merely to attract individuals of the opposite sex; but this hypothesis is, moreover, directly contradicted by facts which suggest an altogether different explanation. As a general rule we may state that, when an Indian woman is looking for a husband, the principal thing for her is that he should be a good hunter or fisherman, and a brave warrior, and thus prove able to support and defend the future family; but she pays little heed to his "ornaments," except when these ornaments, being trophies of chase or war, are direct evidence to the said effect. Similarly, the Indian man is chiefly led by practical considerations when he seeks a wife. The fact that, in a few cases, a woman may apply facial painting, for example, as a charm to attract an occasional lover, does not invalidate this general rule.

---

[1] Crawley, *The Mystic Rose*, p. 135.

[2] Finck, *Love and Love Stories*, p, 232.

[3] This, it seems to me, has been sufficiently proved by Waitz-Gerland (*Anthropologie der Naturvölker*, vi. 35 *sqq.*). The very fact that in the South Sea such animals as snakes and crocodiles are preferably tattooed on the body—animals that play the main part in the religion and superstition of the natives—speaks as strongly for the religious origin of tattooing as it speaks against the theory that it is merely a "decoration" and a means of attracting the opposite sex. More recently the Swedish ethnographer, Dr. H. Stolpe, has established the thoroughly religious character of the whole ornamental art in Polynesia (*Naturfolkens ornamentik*, p. 13 and *passim*).

[4] Westermarck, *op. cit.* (1921), i. 570.

CHAPTER VII

THE ORIGIN OF ORNAMENTAL ART

IN the course of the previous investigations I have incidentally touched upon the ornamental art of the Indians, and it is now time to pay more attention to this particular side of their mentality. I do not, of course, lay claim to an exhaustive treatment of the problems this comprehensive subject puts before us. In the subsequent pages my only purpose is to point out the leading principles of Indian ornamentation, some significant facts being adduced in support of the theories I intend to set forth.

Whereas in recent years much attention has been paid to the purely technical development of the primitive ornaments, the other question, concerning the psychological causes to which the ornamentation owes its ultimate origin, has not been dealt with so often. It is one thing to show from what concrete patterns certain diagrammatic ornaments have originally been derived, another to assign the reason *why* they have been applied to different objects, to weapons and implements, to vessels, to clothes, to the body, and so forth. It is mainly this latter question which will concern us here.

With regard to their original meaning, all Indian ornaments may be referred to three main types: they either represent human figures, animals of different kinds, or so-called linear or "geometrical" designs. Of the last-mentioned, however, we know that the term, although commonly used, is misleading and incorrect. When the Indian paints or engraves lines, triangles, squares, circles, and so forth, on his belongings, he has not started from the abstract idea of such a "geometrical" figure, of which he, in fact, knows nothing. All, or at any rate the majority, of these figures are derived from some concrete prototypes, borrowed from the world of the Indian's experience. In many cases these prototypes, of which the Indian himself mostly seems to be conscious, appear to be representations of parts of the human body or the bodies of animals, the simplification and modification having often gone so far as to make the original pattern almost unrecognizable.[1]

---

[1] See on this point Haddon, *Evolution in Art*, pp. 258, 259. Stolpe, *Studier Amerikansk ornamentik*, p. 7.

How has the savage been led to apply ornaments of this kind to items of his property? As far as I know, this question has never been satisfactorily answered. Against all the explanations given by different writers on this point the objection must be made that the motives they assume for the primitive ornamentation bear no just relation to the essential importance the savages themselves obviously ascribe to the ornamental patterns. The motives assigned are mostly incidental and insignificant. Thus, the Swedish ethnographer, Dr. H. Stolpe, although he is well aware of the religious or magical significance that many savage ornaments possess,[1] explains the frequent occurrence of animal motives in the Indian ornamentation much in the following way. Primarily, pure utility determined the manner in which the savage formed his implements. As soon, however, as in the course of evolution a notion of Beauty arose, additions were made to the implements beyond what was absolutely necessary for their practical purpose. The savage, then, of course derived his artistic motive from his limited sphere of interests, and it was natural enough that, mostly living by hunting, he should take them from the animal world with which he was constantly in such intimate contact. In the process different associations of ideas have largely operated. The accidental resemblance of the material to a certain animal, or some essential part of it, may—for instance, in the case of carved wood figures—have led to a further strengthening of this resemblance by means of some simple cuts. After the power of imitating animal figures in this way had been gradually developed, many other inducements to adorn the implements with such figures may have exercised their influence. They may, for example, have been designed to preserve the memory of some hunting incident, and then, as a secondary object, to communicate the incident to others, in which case they have developed into a real picture-writing, and so forth.[2]

Dr. Stolpe, reasoning thus, probably expresses the view held by most modern students of primitive art. The ornamental figures, whatever they may represent, are real decorations, but the inducements for painting or engraving them on implements, vessels, clothes, etc., have been various and entirely dependent on incidental circumstances and associations of ideas. Thus, for instance, Dr. Max Schmidt has tried to show that, among the Xingú tribes, many animal patterns have been derived simply from the technique of basket raddling, the figures thereby obtained being, on account of some slight external similarity, interpreted as representing certain animals. In the same way have originated, according to Dr. Schmidt, a number of purely " geometrical " ornaments, zigzag lines, triangles, squares, crosses.[1] Dr. Koch-Grünberg and Professor von den Steinen likewise regard the ornamental patterns of the Indians as pure manifestations of their artistic sense, and deny them any deeper significance. When the Indian paints or engraves, for instance animal figures, on his belongings, on rocks, etc., this is only because he naturally takes the motives for his artistic productions from his surroundings, and because the living animal world impresses him more than the rest of nature.[2]

---

[1] See his *Utvecklingsföreteelser i naturfolkens ornamentik*, pp. 13, 46, 73, etc.

[2] Stolpe, *Studier i Amerikansk ornamentik*, p. 4 *sq*.

Although at first sight this reasoning may seem convincing enough, it is certain that it does not solve the problem concerning the psychology behind the ornamental patterns. The Indian ornamentation is not in its essence any expression of the red man's artistic or æsthetic instincts, but is based on more practical ideas. The thesis for which I hope to be able to prove a certain degree of probability in the following pages is: that most Indian ornaments have originally had a purely practical object, being *magical charms against evil spirits*, and that, for instance, the frequent occurrence of animal figures as ornaments is due to the common belief that *the spirits assume the shape of animals.*

In order to prove this thesis it is necessary to enter at first into a short discussion of some important classes of primitive magic, namely, the magic of *names* and the magic of *effigies* or *images*. It is a well-known fact that savage peoples all over the world entertain certain superstitious ideas about names, to which a mysterious power is ascribed, and that they likewise practise all sorts of nefarious magic through human images, in the professed belief that there is an intrinsic connection between a man and an external likeness of him. To what this intrinsic connection between a man and his name or his likeness is due must, however, be especially investigated.

According to the theory advanced by Sir James G. Frazer, and accepted by most other writers on savage customs, the principles of thought on which magic is based resolve themselves into two: first, that like produces like, or that an effect resembles its cause; and second, that things which have once been in contact continue to act on each other even after the contact has been severed. The former principle is called the Law of Similarity, the latter the Law of Contact or Contagion. From the first of these principles the magician infers that he can produce any effect he desires merely by imitating it. From the second he concludes that whatever he does to a material object will affect equally the person with whom the object was once in contact. Charms based on the first principle—the Law of Similarity—are called homœopathic or imitative magic; charms based on the second principle—the Law of Contact—are called contagious magic. When the savage makes an image of his enemy and believes that he can injure or destroy him by injuring or destroying the image, this is homœopathic magic. Again, when he believes that he can influence a person, for instance, through a lock of his hair or a piece of his nail or his clothing, this is contagious magic. Both branches of magic are comprised under the general name of sympathetic magic. On analysis both principles turn out to be merely two different misapplications of the association of ideas. Homœopathic magic makes the mistake of assuming that things which resemble each other are the same; contagious magic makes the mistake of assuming that things which have once been in contact with each other are always in contact. An extreme and more subtle form of the contagious magic is the magic performed through names. A name is, according to primitive ideas, part and parcel of a living being, from which principle it follows that magical influence can be exerted upon him through it.[1]

---

[1] Schmidt, *Indianerstudien in Zentralbrasilien*, Kapitel XV.

[2] Koch-Grünberg, *Zwei Jahre unter den Indianern*, ii. 216 and *passim ; Südamerikanische Felszeichnungen*, p. 68 *sqq.* v. d. Steinen, *Unter den Indianern Central-Brasiliens*, pp. 294, 320, etc. See also Nordenskiöld, *De sydamerikanska indianernas kulturhistoria*, p. 163 *sq.*

In so far as this theory assumes that all sympathetic magic is ultimately due to nothing but an erroneous association of ideas, it has not, in my opinion, reached the fundamentals of primitive thought. The " sympathy " which is supposed to exist between the things is not due to the law of association of ideas alone.[2] When the savage believes that he can influence a person through a lock of his hair or a piece of his nail, this is—since the human spirit is believed to be concentrated in these parts—because of his firm conviction that in the hair and the nail the *soul* of that person is actually present. To possess a lock of a man's hair, or a piece of his nail, is therefore equal to possessing his soul; and thus the possibility of controlling his whole being follows. The case is exactly the same with magical images: what unites the artificial image with the original is not any indefinite material medium or effluvium, but simply the soul, which is supposed to be transferred from the being to be influenced to the object made in his likeness. Hence the material of which the image is made is not indifferent, but is often of a particular kind, which is supposed to possess the proper magical qualities. A significant instance may be mentioned to illustrate this savage view. The ancient Peruvians moulded images of fat, mixed with grain, to imitate the persons whom they disliked or feared, and then burned the effigy on the road where the intended victim was to pass. This they called burning the soul. But they drew a delicate distinction between the kinds of materials to be used in the manufacture of these images, according as the victim was an Indian, or a Virococha,

---

[1] See Frazer, *The Magic Art*, i., chapter iii. Idem, *Lectures on the Early History of Kingship*, pp. 37-42. Haddon, *Magic and Fetishism*. Tylor also long ago, in his *Primitive Culture* (i. 104, 116), pointed out that magic or "Occult Science" is based on a mistaken association of ideas, or "the error of mistaking ideal analogy for real connection."

[2] I am aware that Dr. Frazer not only speaks of a logical basis for magic, *viz.*, the law of association of ideas, but also of a physical basis. "Its

---

physical basis, if we may speak of such a thing, like the physical basis of homœopathic magic, is a material medium of some sort which, like the ether of modern physics, is assumed to unite distant objects, and to convey impressions from one to the other " (*The Magic Art*, i. 174 *sq.*). But nothing more is said about the nature of this " material medium," and little stress, at any rate, is laid upon this side of the " sympathy." Professor Hirn also draws attention to the fact that sympathetic magic has a material basis, and points out that the likeness of a thing, whether it is fashioned by nature in water or air, or whether it is made by man, is, in both cases, thought of as " depriving the thing itself of something of its substance." He refers to the emanation theories set forth by ancient Epicurean philosophers, according to which " shadows, reflections in a mirror, visions, and even mental representations of distant objects, are all caused by thin membranes, which continually detach themselves from the surface of all bodies, and move onward in all directions through the space " (Hirn, *Origins of Art*, p. 293 *sq.*). In his more recent book, *Det heliga skrinet*, Professor Hirn has expressed the same view, according to which there is always some sort of material effluvium which connects the image with the original (Hirn, *Det heliga skrinet*, p. 37 *sq.*). But in these theories the expressions " material medium," " thin membranes," " effluvium," etc., must simply be exchanged for the word " soul." In numerous cases, as we shall presently see, it is expressly stated that the Indians regard shadows reflected in the water, photographs, or other images, as the *souls* of the persons they represent, just as a hair-lock or a nail are supposed to contain the soul of the person to whom they have belonged. If the savages had some notion of an " effluvium " as distinct from the human spirit or soul, they certainly would have a special word for denoting it.

that is, a Spaniard. To kill an Indian they employed maize and the fat of a llama; to kill a Spaniard they used wheat and the fat of a pig, because Virocochas did not eat llamas and preferred wheat to maize.[1] This distinction in regard to the kind of material used, according as the victim was an Indian or a white man, is important. It has evidently been a common idea among the Peruvian Indians that the spirits of the dead reincarnate themselves in llamas, a fact that, among other things, explains the frequent recurrence of this animal in their ornamental art. Again, the fat of an animal in which a human soul is incarnated is especially regarded as magical. Similarly, the Indians believe that the spirit which animates the maize plant is a transmigrated human soul. The fat of the native llama and the maize were therefore, according to the principle " like is cured by like," believed to be able to attract and magically influence the soul of an Indian; whereas, on the other hand, the pig and the wheat, which had been imported by the Spaniards, were in the Indian consciousness associated with the soul of a white man.[2]

Similarly, the magic of names, as will presently be shown, is essentially based on the conception of a soul, of which the name is regarded as a vehicle. From this point of view the distinction between what is called homœopathic and contagious magic appears to be out of place in many cases where it has been applied, in so far as a number of superstitious practices, which have been referred to these two different branches of magic, are in reality based on exactly the same animistic principle. On the whole, it is a question worth considering whether all so-called sympathetic magic has not originally been founded on the notion of a soul, spirit, essence, or whatever we like to call it, which makes the connection or " sympathy " possible. In opposition to Sir James Frazer, who takes magic to have preceded religion in the evolution of thought, I think there are grounds for assuming that a great number of magical practices, which in our days seem to have nothing to do with a belief in spirits, have originally had a purely animistic basis.

---

[1] Arriaga, *Extirpación de la idolatria del Peru*, p. 25 *sq.*

[2] This notion is not peculiar to the Indians, but probably underlies the imitative magic of other primitive races also. Thus, Mr. Skeat relates that the Malays, in their Black Magic, having prepared a wax image of someone who is to be injured, endeavour, before operating, to entice their victim's soul into it; " for them the image alone is not enough " (Skeat, *Malay Magic*, p. 48). As to the connection of the soul with the shadow, image, or reflection in primitive thought, see also Read, *Psychology of Animism* (*The British Journal of Psychology*, vol. viii.), part i., p. 23.

As there is a close analogy between the magic of names and the magic of figures and images, I shall first state the main Indian ideas relating to *names*. The fact that, according to the belief of the Indians, a person's soul is inherent in his name appears most clearly in connection with the Indian theory of generation, of which I shall give an account in a subsequent chapter. When a child comes into the world it is the reincarnated soul of one of its forefathers. The newborn child therefore receives the forefather's name, which at the same time may be the name of an animal, because the ancestor is supposed to have been meanwhile incarnate in that animal. The name-giving is therefore a highly important matter, and it is usually the business of the medicine-man to find out which particular ancestor has been reborn. The precaution of holding the name of a newborn child secret is due to the dread of exposing the soul of the little one to mysterious dangers arising from evilly-disposed persons. When the Incas used to cut off a lock of hair and the nails of their young children and guard them carefully,[1] this superstitious practice was the result of exactly the same consideration as induces the Indians to hide the names of their offspring; the idea is to keep their soul safe. If thus the name may serve as a real safeguard for a person, we can also understand the statement of von Martius relating to the Arawaks, that the name-giving, which takes place with certain ceremonies, is supposed to protect the child against diseases and other evils, and that a nameless person is believed to be more exposed to the evil influences of the demons.[2] For the same reason even grown-up individuals seldom use their proper names in daily life. Thus, the Abipones "think it is a sin to utter their own name,"[3] and of the Onas we are told that it is a rule of etiquette that the name of a person present must never be mentioned, unless he be a very near friend. Instead of mentioning the name the Onas use circumlocutions. Similarly, the name of a dead person is never mentioned in the presence of his relatives.[4] The Indians in the neighbourhood of the rivers Issá and Japurá call their children by the names of birds and animals, or plants and flowers, but never use them in conversation.[5] Likewise, of the Indians of Guiana Im Thurn states that

---

[1] Garcilasso de la Vega, *Comentarios reales*, bk. iv., c. 11.

[2] v. Martius, *Beiträge zur Ethnographie Amerika's*, i. 695.

[3] Dobrizhoffer, *An Account of the Abipones*, ii. 744.

[4] Gallardo, *Los Onas*, p. 355.

[5] Whiffen, "A Short Account of the Indians of the Issá-Japurá District," in *Folk-Lore*, March 13, 1913, p. 46.

"although they have an intricate system of names, it is of little use, in that the owners have a very strong objection to telling or using them, apparently on the ground that the name is part of the man, and that he who knows it has part of the owner of that name in his power. To avoid any danger of spreading knowledge of their names, one Indian, therefore, usually addresses another only according to the relationship of the caller and the called."[1]

That especially the names of the dead are taboo is a well-known fact. The custom is met with among most, if not all, tribes of South America. Generally this taboo prescription has been explained from the Indian's fear lest the dead person should return and do harm to the living, if called on by name. But the proper explanation of the prohibition mentioned must be sought in the fact that, according to primitive belief, the soul is inherent in the name. To mention it is therefore the same as to enter into close contact with the departed soul itself, to which the taboo of death is attached, and this is supposed to entail unfortunate consequences especially for the nearest relatives. For an outsider there is evidently not the same personal danger. But since a person may be controlled and conjured through his name, it is also believed that the repose of the dead in the grave will be disturbed on calling him by name; and this is not desired by the surviving relatives; nay, it may even become dangerous for them. It is therefore considered a dreadful indiscretion against the latter to speak of a deceased and mention his name. This was the general idea I myself found prevailing among the Chaco tribes in the Pilcomayo region.

Illustrative of the Indian superstition we are dealing with is also the custom of changing the name on certain important occasions. Some tribes, as the Lenguas, the Abipones, and the Mbayas,[2] have been in the habit of taking another name after the death of a relative. Azara, speaking of the Lenguas, gives the true reason for this in the following statement: When someone has died, this is, according to their belief, because Death has introduced himself among them. On departing with the deceased he has made a list of the survivors with the intention of fetching them away afterwards. However, after they have changed their names, the demon cannot find those he is looking for, and is obliged to return.[3] The Caribs of Guiana, who

[1] Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p. 220.

[2] Azara, *Viajes por la America del Sur*, p. 227. Dobrizhoffer, *op. cit.*, ii. 445 Boggiani, *I Caduvei*, p. 334.

[3] Azara, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

also keep their names strictly secret from all but their nearest relatives and the medicine-man, are in the habit of taking special nicknames during travelling in order to lead the evil spirits astray.[1] Among the Caribs of the Antilles and some tribes in Brazil it was formerly customary at marriage for both parties to take other names.[2] A Carib man likewise changed his name when he was received among the warriors.[3] In the Inca empire the boys changed their names on the occasion when their ear-lobes were pierced, and the girls at the first menstruation.[4] Of the Araucanian girls we hear that, when they become women, their names must not be mentioned, for in that case they will die.[5] Among some warlike peoples, it has been customary to change the name after the slaying of an enemy. This was, for instance, the practice of the ancient Tupis, where a man took a new name for each enemy he killed; therefore those among them were considered the noblest who had many such names.[6]

In all such cases there is probably no question of a change of name in the sense that the old name is entirely dropped for the new one. The name received at birth is an expression for a man's soul or essence and cannot be given up; the new one is only, as it were, a nickname, intended to conceal the real appellation, and thus to protect the person concerned. If several such nicknames are taken, the security is greater still.[7] The difference between the real and the assumed name was quite conspicuous among the Chaco tribes on the Pilcomayo. The Indians were very ready to take Christian names which were used, for instance, when they went to the whites to work. These Christian surnames they never had any objection to mention, but their proper native names, on the other hand, they were always extremely unwilling to tell me. Only on certain occasions—for instance, at the drinking-feasts when all were in high spirits and very good friends—it happened that the Indians told me one another's names. The native name, received in early childhood, is the *real* name; to reveal it is a perilous thing, especially if the individual *himself* does it. It is to put oneself wholly into the power of the unknown stranger, and wilfully to expose one's soul to mysterious dangers.

---

[1] Penard, *Die menschetende Aanbidders der Zonneslang*, p. 160.

[2] Du Tertre, *Histoire général des Antilles*, ii. 378.

[3] de Rochefort, *Histoire naturelle et morale des Iles Antilles*, p. 553.

[4] Brühl, *Die Culturvölker Alt-Amerikas*, p. 346.

[5] Medina, *Los Aborigenes de Chile*, p. 287.

[6] *The Captivity of Hans Stade of Hesse* (Hakluyt Society), pp. 140, 145. Thevet, *La Cosmographie universelle*, ii. 916.

[7] It is significant on this point that among the ancient Tupis a mother did not allow her daughter to marry or have any sexual intercourse with a man who had not once changed his name since he was a boy. It was thought that the child engendered in such a union would become a *manem*—that is, a feeble and useless being (Thevet, *op. cit.*, ii. 932). The man who has never changed his name is more exposed to evil spirits, and these will badly influence his offspring.

That the name is identified with the soul also appears from the custom of taking the name of an enemy after slaying him. This was formerly practised by the savage Guaranis in Paraguay. When the captive was killed the man who gave him the first blow took his name, which he bore thenceforward.[1] Likewise, among the Caribs the warrior who killed an Arawak chief used to take his name "as a mark of honour."[2] This custom appears quite intelligible when we know that the soul of the slain enemy is supposed to be seated in his name, and that therefore the possession of the latter is an efficacious means of controlling the revengeful spirit. Just as the Indian keeps the scalp or head of his killed enemy to get hold of his spirit, so he may appropriate his name with the same view.[3]

But a man's soul is, according to the Indian idea, not only inherent in certain vital parts of his body and in his name, but can also be deposited in material objects which have originally had no connection whatever with him. When, in the higher culture, we speak of "symbols" and "emblems," which are supposed to stand in some purely ideal relation with individual persons or whole communities, this is only a later development of the primitive idea that the soul or essence of a man may be, as it were, projected on to external material objects. To possess this object is, then, equal to possessing power over the corresponding person. Grubb gives us a significant example of this primitive notion with regard to the Lenguas, when he says that "manuscripts and printed paper, when obtainable, are preserved in order that they may make charms relating to us, writing being in their eyes our special symbol."[4] There can hardly be any doubt that the Lenguas believed that the soul of the white man is "deposited" and inherent in the strange figures of which the writing consists. A similar idea is encountered in the description which von Tschudi gives of the birth-ceremonies among some tribes in Peru. The eldest men of the tribe, who receive the child, blow on it repeatedly in order to expel the disease-demons from it. Then it is given the name of an animal, and the *witnesses engrave with a wooden pin some hieroglyphs on a pair of leaves, which are carefully guarded,* and, on the death of the person concerned, laid in the grave by his side.[1] The object of this " hieroglyph " writing is clear: the soul of the newborn child is deposited for safe keeping, not only in his name, but also in the mysterious figures engraved on the leaves, which, therefore, must be carefully kept.

---

[1] Cabeza de Vaca, *Comentarios*, c. 16 (*Biblioteca de autores españoles*, i. 559).

[2] de Rochefort, *op. cit.*, p. 553.

[3] The magical ideas relating to names have been examined at length by Dr. Clodd, in his *Tom Tit Tot* (1898), and especially in his more recent book, *Magic in Names and in Other Things*, where he has also emphasized the near connection which there is between the name and the soul. See especially chapter v., "The Name and the Soul," p. 224 *sqq.* See also Frazer, *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, p. 318 *sqq.*

[4] Grubb, *An Unknown People in an Unknown Land*, p. 138.

The same principle is carried a step further when the object on to which the soul is projected is a real *imitation* of the owner of the soul. As already pointed out, the magic performed through images and effigies is based on the notion of a sort of soul-transference. We have direct evidence of this in the practice, already referred to, of the ancient Peruvians, who moulded images of fat mixed with grain to imitate the persons whom they disliked or feared, and then burned the effigy on the road where the intended victim was to pass. They said this was to *burn his soul.*[2] Among the Aymará of the present day similar magical practices are in vogue, and they are, no doubt, founded on the same idea. " One of the chief means for mortally hurting anybody through witchcraft," says Bandelier, " is to make a human figure out of grains of Indian corn and pierce it with thorns."[3] Closely connected with the belief that a man's soul may be caught in an image made in his likeness, is the other idea that it is reflected in his shadow, or in a photograph taken of him. It is a fact that could be illustrated by numerous instances, that many Indian languages use the same word for " soul " and for " shadow." Thus, the Arawak word *ueja* means " shadow, soul, image."[4] The Tobas for " soul " use the word *kadepakál,* which means " our (that is, the human) shadow." The Jibaro word *wakáni* means " soul," but also " shadow " reflected on the ground, in the water, or in a mirror. But the photograph taken of a person is also called his *wakáni* or soul. Hence the Jibaros at first strongly objected to being photographed, alleging that with my camera I was taking their souls, by which, again, I was supposed to be able to exert a mysterious influence upon them. Exactly the same ideas prevail among the Canelos Indians who, in the same way, use the word *aiya* to denote both "soul" and "shadow."[1] Similar experiences of the Indian superstition in regard to photographs have been made by several other travellers, both in South and in North America. A significant instance is mentioned by the Scotch missionary Barbrooke Grubb in reference to the Lenguas in Paraguay. The first photograph of a Lengua taken with his own consent was that of Keamapsithyo, afterwards called Philip. When nailed up in Mr. Grubb's hut this photograph was promptly torn down by superstitious Indians, "who regarded it as the soul of Philip which he had stolen, thus explaining the influence he had over him."[2] Similarly, Mr. Whiffen states that the Indians visited by him looked upon his camera as "an infernal machine, designed to steal the souls of those who were exposed to its baleful eyes." By taking photographs of the Indians he was supposed to "steal their souls or, rather, to become master of their souls."[3] In fact, we have probably here an idea which is common to all primitive Indians, namely, that the image or likeness of a man is a projection of his second-self or soul, through which he can be supernaturally influenced. Just as the magic of names, so the magic carried out through images and photographs is therefore evidently based on an animistic principle.

---

[1] v. Tschudi, *Peru. Reiseskizzen,* ii., p. 235.

[2] See *supra,* p. 202 *sq.*

[3] Bandelier, *The Islands of Titicaca and Koati,* p. 106. Cp. Forbes, *The Aymará Indians in Peru* (*Journ. of the Ethnol. Soc. of London,* 1870), p. 44. As to similar practices in ancient times, see also Cobo, *Historia del nuevo mundo,* iv. 151.

[4] v. Martius, *op. cit.,* i. 705.

In order to make it clear how the principles we have just investigated apply to Indian ornamentation, it may be necessary to point out once more the main ideas upon which the magical conjuration is based. The efficacy of the magical instruments, the masks, the drums, the rattle-gourds, the bull-roarers, etc., does not merely depend on the power with which the sorcerer who manages them is personally gifted, but also on some mysterious virtues inherent in the instruments themselves. This virtue is due to many circumstances—the material of which they are made, the sound which is produced by them, and last but not least, the "ornamental" appendages of different kinds with which they are usually furnished.

---

[1] For instances from North America, see Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, i. 388, and Frazer, *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, p. 96 *sq.*

[2] Grubb, *op. cit.*, title-page. As to the superstition of the North American Indians in regard to photographs, see Frazer, *op. cit.*, p. 96 *sq.*

[3] Whiffen, *The North-West Amazons*, pp. 232, 233.

Thus, for instance, the efficacy of drums made of the skin of slain enemies is essentially due to the spiritual energy with which the skin is supposed to be charged. Exactly the same ideas are connected with flutes made of human arm- and thigh-bones, which have been used by the Araucanians and many tribes in Brazil. Again, for instance, the mysterious Yurupary flutes of the Uaupés Indians were made of the *paxiuva* palm, which was sacred on account of the belief that a human spirit was incarnated in this palm.[1] The rattle-gourds likewise combine supernatural virtues of different kinds. The gourd itself is probably supposed to have the magical power of the tree from which it is obtained, and so also the hard seeds or grains with which it is filled and which, on shaking the thing, produce a hollow sound. Some tribes, as the Tupis, the Kobéua, and the Indians of Guiana, also have augmented its magical efficacy by means of the feathers of parrots and other birds, which are full of spiritual power. Finally, we have to observe the figures representing human spirits, or animals, or linear patterns, with which such religious instruments are not seldom ornamented, and which are believed to act as charms. To express the last idea in more general terms: *the object or instrument by which the conjuration is carried out may form a total or partial imitation of the being which the sorcerer is trying to influence.* It is the application of this principle to different branches of Indian ornamental art that we have to examine in this and the following chapter.

The sorcerer's dealing with the evil spirit is a fight in which his own power and skill, and the power which emanates from the magical Instrument combine to overcome and subdue the demon. Falkner, speaking of the Patagonians, gives a vivid description of this fight between the sorcerer and the demon, which it may not be out of place to quote as a typical illustration of the Indian idea of conjuration: "The wizard . . . has a small drum, one or two round calabashes, with small sea shells within them, and some square bags of painted hide, in which he keeps his spells. He begins the ceremony by making a strange noise with his drums and rattle box, after which he feigns a fit or struggle with the devil, who is then supposed to enter him; keeps his eyes lifted up, distorts the features of his face, foams at the mouth, screws up his joints, and, after many violent and distorting motions, remains stiff and motionless, resembling a man seized with an epilepsy. After some time he comes to himself, as having got the better of the demon; next feigns, within his body, a faint, shrill mournful voice, as of the evil spirit, who by his dismal cry is supposed to acknowledge himself subdued."[1] The idea that the demon, being subdued, is compelled to draw near and enter into the magical instrument, or into the sorcerer himself, is characteristic of Indian conjuration. Thus de Lery relates of the rattle-gourds, or *maracas*, of the Tupis, that when they were rattled the evil spirits were supposed to enter into them and afterwards speak through them to the conjurer.[2] The magical instrument may thus secondarily become a sort of oracle. The same idea, as we shall presently find, is particularly evident in the mask-dances.

---

[1] This appears from the Yurupary myth according to which the voice (*i.e.*, the spirit) of a cultural hero, Milômaki, was active in the *paxiuva* flute. See *infra*, p. 309 *sq*.

The magical imitation, as I said, may only be partial, according to the primitive principle *pars pro toto.* Certain charms relating to hunting afford examples of this kind of magic. Thus, the Uaupés Indians, when they go out hunting wild peccary pigs, bury the head of a peccary in the very locality where the herd has once been met with, in order that it may not withdraw, or that other pigs may come to the place where this one has been killed.[3] Here the head of the pig represents the whole animal, all the more as, according to primitive belief, the head is particularly the seat of the spirit or soul. The spirit of the buried pig acts as a charm on the rest of the animals, and is supposed to draw them irresistibly to the spot. Again, of the Onas we are told that, when an Indian goes out to hunt the guanaco, he never omits to put on the *gualchelg*, a triangular piece of skin of grey colour, taken from the forehead of the guanaco. They believe that when the animal sees a hunter who has his head adorned with this piece of skin approach from behind a hillock or a tree, it does not run away.[4] In this case we have the idea that the soul is inherent in the skin of the animal, more especially when it is taken from the head. Probably also the very triangular form of the charm is believed to increase its power. Similarly, the Ashluslay Indians on the lower Pilcomayo, when hunting the ostrich, are in the habit of wearing pieces of skin, taken from the breast of killed ostriches, as charms.[5] The principle is again that the animal is compelled to

[1] Falkner, *A Description of Patagonia*, p. 116.

[2] de Lery, *Histoire d'un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil*, p. 274.

[3] Coudreau, *La France équinoxiale*, ii. 171.

[4] Gallardo, *op. cit.*, p. 187.

[5] Nordenskiöld, *Indianerleben*, p. 54.

draw near because its soul is contained in the skin possessed by the hunter.

More often, however, magic is performed through figures or images, which form as true representations of the original as possible. Thus, when the Lenguas use wax images of animals as charms in hunting,[1] they no doubt fancy that the soul of the animals is caught in these images, and that consequently they can, through them, be controlled at will, and be compelled to draw near the hunter. An interesting example illustrating this superstition is also mentioned by de Rochefort, relating to the Caribs of the Antilles. He states that they did not try to influence their evil spirits, called *maboya*, either by prayers or sacrifices, and that their only remedy against their evil designs was to form small images of wood or some other solid matter, imitating as faithfully as possible the shape in which the demons had appeared to them. These images they hung round the neck in the belief that the *maboya* would torment them less when they wore them.[2] The idea that spiritual beings may be influenced through images made in imitation of them appears, however, more clearly in some mysteries of the Indians in north-west Brazil, mentioned by Dr. Koch-Grünberg, but without an understanding of their true significance. The Kobéua have a peculiar feast, in which the bones of a dead ancestor are exhumed, burned, ground to powder, and at last consumed in *kaschiri*-beer by the partakers in the feast. The object of this rite is to impart the spirit of the dead to the living, and thus facilitate his rebirth. At this feast, moreover, a sort of dance is performed. The dancers wear long yellow strips hanging down from the neck, and clubs adorned with basten pendants in the left hand. In the right hand they hold tubes of *ambauva* wood to which wooden images representing different kinds of fish are tied. During the dance they move ceremoniously forwards and backwards, stamping sometimes on the ground with the right foot and producing hollow sounds with their primitive instruments.[3] In some other " animal-dances without masks," not only images of fishes but also of birds and lizards are used. The birds are, as a rule, made of a light kind of wood, and either slightly coaled, or painted with many-coloured ornaments, and adorned with down and small feathers. They represent humming-birds, small swallows, the *caracarai* vulture, the *urubú* vulture, and other birds, and hang down from two strings decked with down, the strings being fastened to sticks. Two dancers grasp each other round the shoulders with the one hand and hold the sticks with the other, so that the images of the birds hang in front of them from the strings. In dancing they proceed forwards and backwards, marking time to a monotonous chant, by stamping with the foot on the ground. In much the same way they dance with images of fishes and lizards.

---

[1] Grubb, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

[2] de Rochefort, *op. cit.*, p. 476.

[3] Koch-Grünberg, *Zwei Jahre unter den Indianern*, ii., p. 153.

Dr. Koch-Grünberg gives us no satisfactory explanation of this peculiar dance, but seems to be of opinion that the animal images carried in front are believed to transfer certain qualities and powers from these animals to the men, and that the idea is the same as, for instance, that underlying the food prescriptions before and after a birth.[2] But this is certainly a misunderstanding. If this were the idea, what would be the meaning of this transference of animal qualities to men, and what its connection with the feast on the bones of an ancestor above mentioned? As to the real significance of the ceremonies just described, there cannot be much doubt. Even the combination of the first animal-dance with the ceremonial consuming of the dead Indian's bones, makes it certain that we are dealing with the same kind of conjuration as in the real mask-dances which presently will be examined. The transference of the soul of a dead man to the living, although desired, is not without danger. The taboo of death is attached to the departed soul, and the contact with it will therefore necessarily prove fatal to the partakers in the feast unless special precautions are taken. One of these precautions is to mix the powdered bones of the dead in the sacred, fermented *kaschiri*-beer. Again, the object of the ceremony, with the animal images carried in the dance, is simply to conjure the soul in order to neutralize its baneful effects, and the fundamental idea underlying it is the idea of metempsychosis. The spirit of the dead Indian does not merely dwell in the bones of his body; it is also supposed to have been meanwhile incarnated in some animal. When in the dance images representing fishes, birds, and lizards are carried about, this is simply due to the idea that the dead man has possibly been reincarnated in one of these creatures. The belief that the departed reincarnate themselves in certain fishes as well as in birds and reptiles is, as will be shown in detail later on, extremely common in South America, and especially among the Indians of Brazil.

[1] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, ii. 167.

[2] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, ii. 153.

The basten strips which the dancers wear hanging from the neck, as well as the down and feathers with which the images are decorated, are all magical charms to make the conjuration more effective, according to principles already set forth. The same may be said of the sounds produced by the tubes during the ceremony, which, no doubt, are supposed to imitate the sound of the spirit.

Sir Everard F. Im Thurn, after having described the detailed ornamental arrangements which the Indians of British Guiana make for their *paiwari*-feasts, goes on to mention the different magical instruments they use at these great feasts. Among these instruments there are not only drums, all sorts of rattles, flutes, and pan-pipes, but also "*sticks topped with a rude wooden and painted image of some bird, fish, or animal.*"[1] The *paiwari*-feasts, as we are told, are, among other occasions, held to celebrate funerals, and it is probably on such occasions that the painted images are used. There is little doubt that their true significance is to conjure the spirit of the dead, which is thought to have possibly transmigrated into a bird, a fish, or other animal.

With these "animal-dances without masks" the real *mask-dances* are intimately connected. The true significance of the South American mask-dances has long been obscure, and the opinion has, indeed, been expressed that they never can be wholly cleared up.[2] For my own part, however, I believe that they will appear fully comprehensible in the light of the religious and magical ideas which have been found in the course of our previous investigations.

Mask-dances have been in vogue among many tribes in different parts of South America, as among the Onas in Tierra del Fuego, the Lenguas in Paraguay, the Bakaïri and the Karayá in Central Brazil, the Kaua and Kobéua in north-west Brazil, and the Chiriguanos in Bolivia. They have no doubt been gradually developed out of the ordinary dances of conjuration by means of feathers, rattles, and other magical charms which are part and parcel of Indian practical religion. That this is so may also be inferred from a tradition of the Kobéua, according to which all Indian tribes of the Caiary-Uaupés formerly only used the *kangataras* (a kind of feather ornament) in their dances, knowing nothing about masks, which had been introduced later by a tribal hero.[3] Some feather ornaments, in fact, represent an intermediate form between ordinary feather charms and real masks. Thus, Dr. Nordenskiöld mentions a sort of "sun-worship" from among the Quichuas in the province of Caupolican in Bolivia, at which feather ornaments, shaped to imitate the sun, were worn on the head.[1] Likewise, among the Churapas, feather masks representing the sun were used in certain feasts.[2] The principle was the same as in all mask-dances: the spirit which was supposed to dwell in the sun was conjured by the feather crowns, the power of which was due both to the virtue inherent in the feathers, and to their form, which was that of the sun-spirit.

---

[1] Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p. 323.

[2] Ehrenreich, *Beiträge zur Völkerkunde Brasiliens*, p. 38.

[3] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, ii, 163.

Dr. Koch-Grünberg's great work on the Indian tribes of the Rio Negro, in my opinion, is especially important from two points of view: first, it gives the fullest account we have to date of the Indian mask-dances in South America; and second, it affords a valuable contribution to our knowledge of Indian ornamental art. On the other hand, I can by no means agree with Dr. Koch-Grünberg's opinion about the origin and essence of Indian ornamentation, which is not exactly as easily explained as this writer assumes. Similarly, I believe he has failed to recognize the intrinsic relationship which there undoubtedly exists between the masks and the ornaments.

Dr. Koch-Grünberg expressly points out that the mask-dances have a deeper significance. Their object is to "propitiate" (*versöhnen*) the demons, whose evil designs are feared. The dancer, in dressing himself like a demon, and imitating its movements, identifies himself with it. The mysterious power of the mask is transmitted to the wearer, who himself is changed into a powerful demon, and thus becomes capable of expelling the demons or propitiating them.[3] Although this statement is interesting enough, there are still some details, both in the preparation of the masks and in the conjuration itself, which remain obscure.[4] And how shall we account for the

[1] Nordenskiöld, *De sydamerikanska indianernas kulturhistoria*, p. 212.

[2] Nordenskiöld, *Indianer och hvita*, p. 26.

[3] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 139; ii. 196. See also *idem*, "Die Maskentänze der Indianer des oberen Rio Negro und Yapura," in *Archiv f. Anthropologie*, Bd. IV., Braunschweig, 1906, p. 294.

[4] How shall we, for instance, understand that the demons mostly are thought of as being animal-shaped? And how shall we understand that the conjuration of these demons always takes place after a death? Dr. Koch-Grünberg sometimes says that the conjuration has relation to "der Geist des Toten, dem man wie überall böse, rachsüchtige Eigenschaften zuschreibt" (*Zwei Jahre unter den Indianern*, i. 139); sometimes, again, that it is believed to expel *the demons who*

rigidly-observed custom of *burning* the masks after the dance, as well as the extreme care taken to hide the masks from women and children? If a woman see the mask she will die—that is the general belief. In such practices we meet special taboo notions which are characteristic of Indian religion.

The Indian imagination peoples the whole universe with numerous invisible and generally malignant spiritual beings, who inhabit the earth, the water, the air, the mountains, the dangerous cataracts in the rivers, and so forth,[1] and who appear especially in the shape of certain animal beings belonging to these different natural domains, such as quadrupeds, fishes, birds, reptiles, and even insects. As the mask-dances among many tribes always take place after a death, it seems to be believed that the departed has been changed into one of these animal beings, be it a tiger, a crocodile, or some other ferocious beast, or only a fish, a bird, or a butterfly. Most of these demons seem to be regarded as evil, even though the animals they represent may be quite harmless in natural life. Yet it must be observed that a spirit may be feared as dangerous and dealt with by way of conjuration, without being, however, evilly-disposed against the living. The spirit may even be regarded as good and useful—as is, for instance, the case with many plant demons—and yet at the same time be considered dangerous to come in contact with, on account of the taboo of death which is attached to it, and which acts mechanically like an electric force.

When many different demoniac animals are imitated in the mask-dance, this may be due to the uncertainty as to which particular animal the dead has transformed himself into, a circumstance that makes it necessary to conjure them all for safety's sake. Or it may be believed that the dead, changed into a demon, calls upon all the rest of the demons in the whole neighbourhood, and in their company makes his onset on the village. The latter idea is indicated in some accounts of the Indian mask-dances.

The leading principle upon which all conjurations by means of masks are based is that of imitation. The masked dancer imitates the external appearance of the spirits, their sounds, movements, etc., and is thus supposed to get hold of their soul or essence, which in its

---

have caused the death of the tribesman, and who may fetch away other people also (*op. cit.*, i. 139; ii. 173). The fundamental idea, that of a reincarnation of the dead in animals, is not clearly pointed out.

[1] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, ii. 173.

turn implies the power of controlling them. The whole mask is generally made so as to resemble the demon, who, as we have seen, is mostly animal-shaped. Its magical efficacy is augmented in different ways: by the material itself of which it is made, by feathers, by human and monkey's hair, and lastly, by ornaments painted on it. The Kaua and Kobéua masks were made of bast, a material which is commonly used for magical purposes. Moreover, many-coloured " geometrical " figures, representing the fell- or skin-designs of the animals to be imitated, were painted on them. If the mask was, for instance, to represent a tiger, small red circles were painted on it to signify the reddish-yellow fell of that beast, and a number of black circles were placed between to signify its dark designs.[1] The mask of the alligator was roughly made of bast, which was folded together so as to resemble the reptile.[2] Similarly, the mask of the butterfly was an imitation of that little but feared insect. The wings were formed by a sort of raddle work, with patterns in many colours painted on it, and the snout by a bent climber called *sipó*. Even the fluttering of the butterfly was rendered by a special painting on the breast of the mask.[3]

Professor von den Steinen, whilst emphasizing that the Xingú mask-dances had no religious significance or sacred character whatever, gives a detailed description of the masks used in them. Among the Bakaïri and the other Xingú tribes also the masks were representations of different animals, of the cayman, the *meréschu* fish, the pigeon, the black-cock, etc. Thus, the Mehinakú in a cayman-dance used a mask with ornamental paintings which evidently were meant to represent the scales of the reptile.[4] Of special interest is the *meréschu*-pattern, which was the most common ornament of the Xingú tribes and played a great part at the painting of the masks. It was now a purely ornamental square figure; but the concrete prototype of the ornament, of which the Indians still were quite conscious, was a small lagoon fish, a kind of *Serrasalmo*, called *meréschu* in the native language. The small checks were supposed to render the body of the fish; and triangular black paintings in each of the four corners represented its head, its tail, and its dorsal and ventral fins.[5]

[1] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 118.
[2] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 137.
[3] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, ii. 182.
[4] v. d. Steinen, *Unter den Naturvölkern Central-Brasiliens*, p. 309.
[5] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 262 *sq.*

Why was the *meréschu*, with such predilection, painted on the masks? Professor von den Steinen's explanation is much the following: That fishes played the principal rôle in the ornamentation was due to the fact that they formed the staple food of the Indians, and, being caught in large masses, naturally gave rise to general feasts and banquets. The *meréschu*-pattern, again, had been victorious over other kinds of patterns, because the small square figure of that fish was particularly convenient as an ornamental design.[1] But this explanation cannot, for reasons mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, be regarded as satisfactory. The Bakaïri masks, although they may now have lost their original character, certainly once had exactly the same magical significance as those of the Kaua and Kobéua. When certain animal beings were imitated in the masks or painted on them, this can, conformably to our earlier explanation, only have been due to the belief that the demons—*i.e.*, the souls of the departed—had reincarnated themselves in these very animals.[2] The interesting account Professor von den Steinen gives of the doctrine of metempsychosis held by the Xingú tribes makes it more than probable that this was the real reason for representing, for instance, caymans, *meréschus*, pigeons, and black-cocks in masks. It is true that the *meréschu* is not expressly mentioned among the fishes to which, according to von den Steinen, these Indians applied their theory of reincarnation. Nevertheless, there is good ground for assuming that once it played the same part in their superstition as, for instance, the *pintado* and the *dourado* fish, which had to be solemnly propitiated and conjured before they could be eaten.[3] Through imitating the fish or painting its likeness on the mask it was possible to control the spirit dwelling within it. That the *meréschu*-pattern had become predominant in the Xingú ornamentation was, according to this hypothesis, simply due to the fact that it was the fish most often caught and used for food, from which, again, followed the necessity for frequent propitiation. It was characteristic of these Indians to apply their theory of reincarnation particularly to such animals and plants as were most used for food.[1]

---

[1] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, pp. 293, 320, 322.

[2] This hypothesis gives a very natural explanation of a detail with regard to the masks which much struck Professor von den Steinen—namely, that the Bakaïri animal masks also wore some features of the human face. Thus, the pigeon mask, instead of having a beak like that of the pigeon, had a human nose and mouth (*op. cit.*, p. 319). We can understand this peculiarity when we know that the masks represented *men (or human souls) changed into animals.*

[3] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 492.

Although the Xingú Indians were still quite aware that the *meréschu*-pattern was a real representation of the fish after which it was named, it is, of course, conceivable that the original idea of a reincarnation of the dead in the *meréschu* might have been forgotten and only left its traces in the notion that the square pattern was, in general, a magical charm. The latter notion was certainly held, just as most other purely "geometrical" patterns, triangles, circles, spirals, crosses, etc., are regarded as charms, even though their material origin is no longer remembered.

The *meréschu*-pattern, although the most important, was not the only pattern on the Xingú which had originated in this way and received a magical significance. There was another pattern, named from the *pacú* fish,[2] which no doubt had the same history as the *meréschu*. Of the *pacú* we know that it was one of the animals the Karayá used to imitate in their mask-dances,[3] and from this we may infer that it was looked upon as an incarnation of a human soul. The Bakaïri also had a pattern representing the *kuómi* fish, the Auetö an *akára*-pattern, so called after the *akára* fish, a placoidion,[4] and so forth.

The magical principle of imitation also appears in the mask-dances of the Lenguas and the Onas. These, however, were not performed after a death, as among the tribes of Rio Negro, but at the initiation of boys and girls at puberty. Yet the ideas are at bottom the same, for the demons which the Lenguas and the Onas used to conjure on these occasions were probably spirits of the departed.

According to the belief of the Onas, the spirits of the dead sometimes transmigrate into objects and phenomena of nature, such as the heaven, the clouds, the thunder, mountains, stones, dark abysses, etc. Consequently, in their mask-dance, called *clocketem*, the object of which is to initiate the boys into the mysteries of manhood, all these powers are imitated as faithfully to nature as possible. The masks mainly consist in a guanaco skin, from which the hair has been removed in order to make it possible to paint it in the colours necessary for the imitation. Thus, the mask representing the heaven,

---

[1] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, pp. 492, 493.

[2] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, Taf. xx., 3 and 9.

[3] Ehrenreich, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

[4] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, pp. 259, 267.

Oleming, is painted with red and white spots. His wife, *Jalpen*, wears a completely white dress, to imitate the colour of the clouds, the spirit of which she is. *Jachai* is the spirit of the black stones and the dark abysses. It is the demon most feared, and its colour is almost black.[1]

The idea connected with these mysteries is the same as that underlying all ceremonies performed with young men at puberty. At a younger age they are, as the women are always, physically and spiritually too weak to be able to deal with the demons. To initiate them in the mysteries of the men is therefore to impart to them the art of conjuration, and to give them, once for all, the necessary power of resistance against the spirits, by bringing them into close contact with these. The initiation thus implies the ability to take part, for the future, in all magical conjurations and religious ceremonies, from which the weaker members of the community are excluded.

Among the Lenguas the feast in which the mask-dance is performed is called *yanmana*, and is connected with "the coming of age of a girl." Some boys, dressed in ostrich feathers and wearing masks to represent evil spirits, issue from the forest, running one behind the other, and move in and out among the crowd, jingling bunches of hoofs, and from time to time uttering prolonged shrill cries. When they circle round near the girl some of the women pretend to protect her, and to drive off the demons by dancing and chanting round her.[2]

Among all Indian peoples the ceremonies performed with girls at puberty have for their object partly to protect them for the time being, partly to *harden* them durably against certain evil spirits, to which a woman is always badly exposed during menstruation.[3] The hardening implies that the girl has to be brought into close contact with the spirits, but this must take place under such favourable circumstances that she does not succumb to them, but is able to resist them. This is also the real object of the *yanmana* feast among the Lenguas. The demons have been conjured and compelled to enter into the boys dressed in the magically powerful ostrich feathers and masks. When, therefore, the girl is brought into close contact with the demons while they are thus rendered harmless, she is supposed to acquire, for the future, a certain " immunity " against them. The idea of the *yanmana* feast is thus, we find, much the same as that of the *clocketem* of the Onas, and the same principle of hardening, in fact, appears in most Indian initiations.

---

[1] Gallardo, *op. cit.*, pp. 334, 335. Cojazzi, *Gli indii dell' Arcipelago Fueghino*, p. 33 *sqq*. According to Cojazzi, the spirit of the black stones is called *Schort*, and *Jalpen* is his wife, and not *Oleming's*. See also Koppers, *Unter den Feuerland-Indianern*, pp. 108 *sq.*, 117.

[2] Grubb, *op. cit.*, p. 178, plates facing pp. 180 and 182.

[3] See *supra*, p. 10.

Not only is the external appearance of the demons imitated in the mask-dances, but also their sounds and movements and baneful qualities. The object of this imitation is, of course, the same as in the former case. The voice and the characteristic movements of a living being form as true expressions of his essence as a material likeness made of him. By imitating the demons in this respect also, it is therefore possible to get hold of their souls and to control them. Thus, for example, in the mask-dances of the Kaua the mask representing the black vulture, by certain motions of his body, mimicked the waddling walk of that bird. The jaguar-dancer, again, jumped fiercely about in cat-like springs with a curved body, producing, with an *ambauva* tube, sounds which at a distance recalled the roar of the feared beast.[1]

Mask-dances are performed on different occasions. Among some Indians, as the tribes in north-west Brazil, they only take place after a death; among others, as the Lenguas and the Onas, they form part and parcel of the puberty ceremonies. Yet, even in this case the spirits conjured are probably in reality souls of the departed, and the same may be said, for instance, of the mask-dances which the

---

[1] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 131, 135, 136. It seems to be the rule that the sound of the magical instrument, which is used in religious ceremonies, ought to imitate the sound of the demon which is conjured. Thus, we gather that the sacred flutes used at the Yurupary mysteries of the Uaupés are believed to contain the voice of a tribal hero, Milómaki, who has created all fruits, and who is influenced at the mysteries by dancing and by playing with the flutes (Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, ii. 292, 293). The Chorotis in Chaco are in the habit of wearing round their necks a kind of flat whistle, made of wood, and usually ornamented with incised figures, with which whistle they now and then produce shrill sounds during their religious dances. The sound of these whistles is supposed to imitate the sounds made by the spirits, and to have the power of frightening them away (See my treatise, *Indian Dances in the Gran Chaco* [*op. cit.*], p. 34 *sq.*). The same may be the case with the dull sound produced by the rattle-gourds, as may be inferred from the fact that, in the rattling of the hard seeds or pebbles contained in the gourds, the sorcerers believe they hear the voice of the conjured and subdued demon. Cp. Falkner, *A Description of Patagonia*, p. 116; v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 696: " Der Paje schüttelt sie (die Maraca) und lauscht dem prophetischen Geklapper der darin enthaltenen kleinen Feuersteine "; de Lery, *Histoire d'un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil*, p. 274.

Tecunas performed on the birth of a child. The incident was celebrated with a great feast, at which the hair of the newborn babe was pulled off, a circumcision made upon him, etc. The partakers in the feast were dressed in grotesque masks representing different animals of the wood—jaguars, tapirs, deer, birds, and even the annoying insect *garapato* or tick.[1] That these demons were nothing but spirits of the dead, changed into animals, may be inferred from the fact that the same Tecunas, according to the information of some Portuguese writers, believed in the transmigration of human souls after death in other bodies, " even in those of irrational animals."[2]

Again, among the Karayá mask-dances are held to celebrate successful fishing and hunting expeditions. If, after such an expedition, there is a good supply of food, the chief decrees that a dancing-feast shall be held, which goes on so long as the provisions last. The masks represent animals, and especially fishes. Each mask produces a special sound, which is characteristic of the animal mimicked.[3]

As already pointed out, it is a common belief among the Brazilian Indians that the dead for preference reincarnate themselves in fishes and in animals which are much valued as game. Certain mysterious ceremonies performed on the Xingú with the game before it was eaten depended on this belief. It is also highly significant that among these tribes the hunting songs were the same as the songs at the death-feasts.[4] We are, therefore, justified in concluding that the demons, imitated in the mask-dances of the Karayá, in reality bore relation to transmigrated human spirits, which were conjured with a view to neutralizing their harmful influences.

[1] v. Spix and v. Martius, *Reise in Brasilien*, iii. 1188. v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 445.

[2] v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 446.

[3] Ehrenreich, *Beiträge zur Völkerkunde Brasiliens*, p. 37. Krause, "Ethnographische Forschungsreise in Zentralbrasilien," in *Zeitschrift f. Ethnologie*, Bd. XLI., 1909, p. 499.

[4] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 493.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ORIGIN OF ORNAMENTAL ART (*concluded*)

THE result at which we have arrived in the previous chapter is that the masks are purely magical things, and that the ornamental paintings, feathers, etc., with which they are provided, are not real decorations but charms, according to magical ideas which are deeply rooted in the Indian mind. Exactly the same holds true of the ornamentation of other religious instruments, drums, rattle-gourds, flutes, bull-roarers, and dancing-staffs.

When the *drums* are painted with ornamental patterns of one kind or another, these patterns are supposed to augment their conjuring or exorcising power. This may be said, for instance, of the huge drum made of a hollowed tree which Professor von den Steinen found outside the "flute-house" of the Bakaïri, and which was irregularly painted with human figures and figures representing the spinal column of fishes.[1] This drum, which was beaten at the religious feasts, had the same sacred character as the whole flute-house, and so had the flutes and bull-roarers that were kept in it. Nor can there be any doubt that the great signal drums which Dr. Koch-Grünberg mentions as found among the Tukano, and which were painted with yellow patterns on one of the sides, had exactly the same magical significance. These drums were beaten some days previous to the commencement of a great feast, and also at the feast itself, during which the drumming was accompanied by flute-playing.[2]

Smaller drums are commonly used in South America, and they have exactly the same magical significance as such instruments have, for instance, among the Shamans of Siberia. Seldom are they ornamented with painted or incised figures, but when they are, these figures have conspicuously a "mystic" meaning, and are believed to augment the power of the instrument. On this point a statement by Dobrizhoffer relating to the ornamented magical drum of the Abipones is significant. "They believe every sick person to be possessed of an evil demon," says the Father; "hence their physicians always carry a drum *with figures of devils painted on it*, which they strike at the beds of sick persons, to drive the evil demon which causes the disorder from the body."[1]

---

[1] v. d. Steinen, *Unter den Naturvölkern Zentral-Brasiliens*, p. 92 *sq*.

[2] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 276, 278. Similar big signal drums are used by the Jibaros, although they are not ornamented. But they have essentially a magical or religious significance. At their great feasts the Indians beat the drum in a special way, believing that thus they are able to summon the demons of the hills, who also, as is supposed, use similar giant drums and are pleased at hearing the beats.

The *rattle-gourds* among some tribes afford interesting examples of a magical ornamentation. Among the Chaco tribes in the Pilcomayo region it was quite a common thing that the rattle-gourds, which played the main rôle in all religious ceremonies, were ornamented with linear patterns, zigzag lines, triangles, and squares. Yet, although these ornaments undoubtedly had been applied, not for the sake of decoration, but for magical purposes, this intention is not in them equally conspicuous, as it is, for instance, in the ornamentation of the Lengua gourds. Of these ornamented gourds Mr. Grubb says: "The Indian displays his artistic powers by engraving the smooth, polished sides of gourds. The figures are, for the most part, those of natural objects and animals, while some are attempts to express his idea of evil spirits." Mr. Grubb also, in one of his illustrations, renders some of the designs engraved on these gourds. Thus, one of the figures the Indians used to engrave was that representing the forest *kilyikhama*, "the most dreaded of all spirits, a long, thin, many-limbed form with flaming eyes. Indians lost in the forest have been known to go mad through fear of encountering such apparitions." On a gourd which is said to afford a characteristic proof of this kind of Lengua ornamentation we see a spirit, armadillos, pigs, an ostrich, beetles, a tortoise, snake skins, and palm trees, which are rudely carved out with a bone lancet and smeared with a burnt stick. "These engraved gourds," we are told, "constitute diaries of journeys, indicating the various animals, spirits, and types of country seen *en route*."[2]

Mr. Grubb's statement does not refer merely to rattle-gourds, but also to gourds which the Lenguas use as food- and water-vessels, etc., but this fact does not lessen its importance. However, with regard to the reasons Mr. Grubb assigns for the ornamentation of the gourds, I venture to make a remark. It probably would not occur to these primitive Indians to keep real "diaries" of journeys with the object of maintaining the memory of things they have seen, or incidents they have experienced during their travels. The engravings must have had some other more practical purpose. When the Indian, starting on a journey, takes his rattle-gourd with him, this can only be because he believes that he will have some practical use for it on the way. In fact, he never fears evil spirits more than when he puts his foot on strange ground. Everywhere and in a thousand different shapes—in human form, in the form of animals, trees, etc.—supernatural foes may cross his path and inflict evils upon him. He must constantly be on the alert to keep off these foes. When he meets an ostrich, a pig, an armadillo, a snake, he fancies this is the shape in which an evil demon may be approaching him at that moment. He then immediately engraves its *likeness* on his gourd, and, thus augmenting the natural power of the instrument, believes himself to possess an efficacious charm with which he can control the spirit and keep it at bay. Or he sees a tree—the palm especially is sacred—a bush, or a formation of the country which strikes him by some peculiarity. In these appearances he likewise divines the presence of a spirit, and for the same reason may depict them on the gourd in order to counteract the evil influences which he fears. Or the Indian fears to meet in the darkness the hideous human form of the dreaded *kilyikhama*. The safest way of escaping the monster, in his opinion, is to catch its essence or vital power in the image engraved on the gourd. It is only in this way that the gourds become "diaries of journeys," just as the rock-engravings may, in spite of their purely magical origin, gradually develop into a sort of "picture-writing." It is hardly probable that the Lengua should, for the sake of mere amusement, depict on his belongings a being so greatly feared as the *kilyikhama*. There must have been some specially strong motives for "decorating" the gourds with its image.

---

[1] Dobrizhoffer, *An Account of the Abipones*, ii. 90.

[2] Grubb, *An Unknown People in an Unknown Land*, p. 75, fig. facing p. 76.

The magical gourd of the Kobéua likewise was decorated not only with parrot feathers, but also with specially engraved ornaments, consisting in "parallel lines, curved lines, triangles, and human figures." The photograph of the gourd shows a human figure (or, rather, a human spirit) with the hands lifted up in the usual attitude of conjuration.[1] Dr. Koch-Grünberg says that in spite of repeated inquiries he could not find out the significance of these figures. For my own part I have no doubt that they served exactly the same purpose as the figures engraved on the rattles of the Lenguas.

---

[1] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, ii. 156.

In the *flutes* and *bull-roarers* we have other magical instruments which are usually ornamented with engraved or painted designs. That they are no playthings, but have a most serious significance, appears even from the fact that they are used at the death-feasts. The departed spirits are conjured and rendered harmless by means of the flutes and bull-roarers. The demon is compelled to enter the instrument, which is thus changed into a sort of fetish in the same way as the masks, drums, and rattle-gourds. Hence, for instance, among the Siusi the flutes have the same names as the demons in whose " honour " they are played.[1] Since they are tabooed because of the contact with the spirits, they are extremely dangerous for the uninitiated and weaker members of the community. The Yurupary flutes on the Rio Tiquié were made of the sacred *paxiuva* wood. Their nether end was smeared with clay, upon which red patterns were painted with *carayurú*.[2] The bull-roarers which Professor von den Steinen found among the Bororó and the Kuliséhu tribes are likewise interesting from an ornamental point of view. Their magical power, according to my theory, was partly due to the peculiar humming or whirring sound which they produced when swung round, and which evidently was supposed to imitate the voice of the spirits, but partly also to their external form and the ornamental patterns painted on them. Some bull-roarers, which this traveller obtained from the Nahuquá, had the *shape of fishes*. One of them was, moreover, decorated with snake-like patterns, while another was painted black, with interjacent square figures representing fishes or bats.[3] All these ornamental arrangements, of course, had nothing to do with true decoration. That the bull-roarers had the form of fishes, and had figures of fishes painted on them, can only have been due to the fact that they were used to conjure spirits which were supposed particularly to incarnate themselves in such creatures—as we know, a common belief among the Xingú tribes. The existence of patterns representing snakes and bats upon the bull-roarers shows that the demons were thought to have possibly assumed the shape of other animal beings also. Yet it is probable that the latter patterns, which were now almost purely geometrical, only served as charms in general to augment the magical power of the instrument.

---

[1] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 188.

[2] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 345.

[3] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 327.

With the bull-roarers we may compare the *Rückenhölzer* of the Bakaïri, the cylindriform wooden staffs, decorated with patterns, which were carried on the back at the dances as a sort of festive ornament. The patterns represented *meréschus, uluris* (the triangular basten coverings of the women), bats, the *agau* snakes, locusts, and a "small bird."[1] Of the same class of magical instruments we may reckon the ordinary *dancing-staffs*, which are used for marking the time at the dances, generally by striking them on the ground. Such dancing-staffs are quite common in South America, but they are not always ornamented with paintings. The Chaco tribes, for instance, simply use long canes or rude staffs with bunches of deer's or tapir's hoofs tied at the top, to produce a loud jangling sound when the thing is struck on the ground. On the other hand, the dancing-staffs which Dr. Koch-Grünberg found among many tribes in north-west Brazíl were always ornamented, some with peculiar geometrical figures, triangles, etc., others with patterns representing human spirits, monkeys, alligators, birds, millipeds, locusts, and what not.[2] It is evident that both the *Rückenhölzer* of the Bakaïri and the dancing-staffs of the Rio Negro tribes served to conjure the evil spirits during the dances, and we may assume that the conjuring power of these instruments was really due to the mysterious figures painted or engraved on them. The magical principle is here the same as in all similar cases: that of controlling the spirits by imitating them.

This imitation, however, as pointed out before, need not necessarily be an absolute one, but may be only relative and partial, and this is particularly the case with the so-called geometrical patterns. That these patterns—the squares, triangles, spirals, circles, etc.—were originally derived from some concrete objects borrowed from the Indian's experience, has already been mentioned. Generally they represent some vital parts of the human body or the bodies of certain animals. Thus, the trunk of the human body may be roughly sketched by a square figure. Squares may also signify the body of fishes (on the Xingú especially the *meréschu* fish), and so forth. Of common occurrence is an X-shaped ornament, which may be an impressionistic drawing of the human body, representing either the breast and the stomach, or the trunk and the legs, or the body of some animal, for instance, of a bird or a fish.[1] Again, the triangle which enters into the latter pattern has been extensively applied in Indian ornamentation. The triangle likewise may represent the body of a man or an animal,[2] or some other part of the human body, for instance, the head or the fingers. On the Xingú, triangles and squares also signified bats.[3] The cross, again, which, as we know, has been largely used in America independently of Christian influence, is evidently in many cases nothing but a diagrammatic representation of a human figure with the arms stretched out. Such figures are, according to the Indian theory of magic, powerful charms against malevolent human spirits, and it is interesting to note that, as a matter of fact, most human figures in Indian ornamentation have the arms stretched out as if to ward off some evil influence.[4] Even the figures of certain animals may occasionally be rendered by simple cross-lines. Thus, Dr. Ehrenreich found that in the ornamentation of the Karayá the frequently occurring cross was nothing but a kind of lizard.[5] In all such cases, where the linear ornaments appear to be but vague and diagrammatic representations of some living being, whether human or animal, they are, in my opinion, to be explained in accordance with the magical ideas set forth before. But the geometrical ornaments may also be simply representations of objects that are in themselves regarded as charms or amulets, be they parts of living beings or purely material things. Thus the triangle, the most common linear ornament, may simply represent, for instance, the head of an arrow or the tooth of an animal. The Indian firmly believes that he can intimidate evil spirits by means of pointed instruments, and both arrows and animals' teeth play an important part as charms. If any object is believed to have power as an amulet, the same power is ascribed to its painted or engraved likeness. Whatever the original object may be, and even when this has been entirely forgotten, as may gradually happen, the notion still remains that *the triangular figure itself is a charm*, and this is perhaps now the most common motive for using that pattern in decorative art. The same may be said of squares, crosses, and other linear ornaments.[1]

---

[1] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, pp. 93, 265, 266.

[2] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 202; ii. 65, 84, 235-237, 292.

---

[1] See the figures in Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, ii. 236, and Schmidt, *Indianerstudien in Zentralbrasilien*, pp. 284, 388.

[2] See, for instance, the interesting triangular bird-figures in Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, ii. 234, and Schmidt, *op. cit.*, 384, figs. 224 and 225.

[3] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, Taf. ix., 1 and 6. Ehrenreich, *Beiträge zur Völkerkunde Brasiliens*, p. 25.

[4] Typical instances of this are found in Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, ii. 187, 189, 196-201. See also Boman, *Antiquités de la région Andine*, ii. 681.

[5] Ehrenreich, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

After these short remarks on the geometrical ornaments we may pass on to examine how the principles mentioned apply to some other kinds of ornamented objects. Although the magical significance of the ornamental patterns appears most clearly with regard to things like masks, drums, and bull-roarers, which in themselves have a magical character, we shall, on closer examination, find that the ornamentation is in other cases based on exactly the same ideas. The fear of evil supernatural influences is a prominent feature in the mental physiognomy of the Indian and everywhere influences his art as it influences his social customs.

Thus, the practice of painting the *body* and the *clothing* with ornamental patterns has undoubtedly the same superstitious basis as the simple coating with paint. The prophylactic efficacy ascribed to tattooing, as we have seen, is partly due to the scarification with which it is connected, as well as to the strong matter (ashes, the juice of a tree, etc.) which is rubbed into the wounds; but partly also to the patterns themselves, which are supposed to possess some power of their own. The designs, painted or tattooed on the face or the body, mostly consist of linear figures, but other kinds of ornaments are also sometimes employed. During my stay among the Tobas some painted face-ornaments came under my notice which are of interest as affording direct evidence of magical pattern-painting. An old woman appeared with a small arrow painted in brown on each cheek on the evening of the day on which a brother of hers had died. The true significance of this face-painting may be inferred from the fact that the same evening all inhabitants of the village carried arrows or sticks in the hands when they moved about outside the huts, and that the nearest relatives of the dead, who had deserted the house of death, had made themselves a whole fence of arrows stuck in the ground, inside which they spent the night. The object of all these precautions was professedly to keep away the death-demon, and this, too, must have been the object of the arrows which the old woman had painted on her cheeks. The Indians believe that they can intimidate supernatural foes in the same way as their natural enemies, and arrows as a matter of fact in South America play an important part as magical charms.

---

[1] That "geometric" figures are in themselves regarded as magical charms is clear from the way in which they are sometimes used to expel disease-demons. Thus, among some tribes in Venezuela, when the medicine-man goes to a sick person to cure him, he first, we are told, with his *maraca* (rattle-gourd) draws certain circles, semicircles, ellipses, curves, and other geometric figures, in the air, and thereafter begins to treat the patient (Arvelo, *Vida indiana*, p. 53). When, in a Chiriguano village in Bolivia, an epidemic disease was raging, the medicine-man took a stick in which he incised certain marks, and which he then stuck in the ground on the path leading to the river, along which the disease-spirit was supposed to pass to and from the village. This ornamented stick was believed to keep off the demon, so that it could not return (Nordenskiöld, *Forskningar och äventyr i Sydamerika*, p. 43). In much the same way the Mosquito Indians in Central America try to avert epidemics. The *sukias* (medicine-men) consult together, and note their dreams to ascertain the nature and disposition of the disease-bringing spirit. After muttering incantations all night, and invoking all sorts of terrible monsters, they plant small painted sticks, mounted by grotesque figures, to the windward of the village, and announce the expulsion of the evil (Bancroft, *Native Races*, i. 743).

The Toba women generally paint themselves in the face during their menstrual periods, the painting being, as pointed out before, a protective charm against evil spirits. Although the rule was that the whole face was painted red with *urucú*, ornamental patterns were also sometimes applied on these occasions. Thus, I noticed a Toba girl who had a couple of arrow-heads painted on each cheek, and another had her cheeks ornamented with figures which evidently represented the teeth of an animal. These patterns also were obviously prophylactic charms.

Among the Chorotis, at the feast held in honour of the girls at the attainment of puberty, most of the men who took part in the ceremonies were painted in the face in one way or another. On such an occasion some of the men had, with charcoal, painted on their cheeks the X-shaped geometrical ornament I have mentioned before. Considering the purely religious character of these ceremonies, we may take for granted that these patterns were likewise charms wherewith to conjure the spirits.

Professor von den Steinen, whilst laying stress on the practical object ordinary body-painting had among the Xingú Indians, seems yet to be of the opinion that pattern-painting was nothing but a decoration and wholly based on æsthetic considerations. Yet he mentions some cases of facial pattern-painting which evidently were due to superstitious ideas. Or how shall we explain, for instance, the painting of the *ranchão* girls among the Bororó? Among these Indians the unmarried men lived together in a special big house called *ranchão* in the lingoa geral, and *baitó* in the Bororó language. Now and then girls were seized and carried off by force into this house, where thereafter all the men lived with them in a sort of communal marriage. But before a girl was taken into the *ranchão*, her face was carefully painted with special lines and ornaments.[1] The explanation of this curious custom may be obtained from some other statements relating to the character of the *Männerhaus*. It was not only a place where the unmarried men lived and worked together, it was at the same time a centre of certain important religious ceremonies, especially of the death-dances and the hunting-feasts (which had the character of death-feasts). In this house also the bull-roarers and other religious instruments seem to have been kept.[2] Although we are told that women had access to the *ranchão*, we may assume that originally it belonged to the same class of tabooed places as the flute-houses among some other Brazilian tribes, and that under ordinary circumstances entrance into it was considered dangerous, at least for younger women. The painting of the abducted girls may therefore have been undertaken simply to protect them against the demons with which they had to come in close contact by entering into the *ranchão*. Another fact, pointing in the same direction, is that the girls were painted with the same ornaments as the Bororó used to apply to the basten coverings (*uluri*) worn by the women, as well as to some of the bull-roarers.[3] Both the bull-roarers themselves and the patterns painted on them, as we have seen, had a magical significance, and the same certainly holds true of the *uluris*.

The view that the pattern-painting, when applied to the body, has essentially a magical significance, is also confirmed by the observations which the French traveller Crevaux made among the Indians of Guiana. "Les Indiens actuels," he states, "ne partent jamais en voyage ou en guerre sans se couvrir le corps de peintures qui ont pour but, disent-ils, *de chasser les diables qui pourraient les faire mourir*."[4] Among the Oyampi Indians on the Oyapok the same explorer made some drawings of the designs which the inhabitants in a village painted on the body; these designs represented men, tigers, dogs, birds, scorpions, tortoises—"in short, all the animals and demons of the country."[5] A similar instance is mentioned by Father Rivero relating to the Betoyes Indians of the Orinoco. When an Indian wants to kill another Indian, he sends a venomous snake to sting him, the snake being regarded as an evil demon. The antidote for the sting of a snake is *to paint various figures of snakes upon the legs*, "in order that the poison of the painted snakes may frighten away the poison of the living ones."[1] Again, the ancient Indians of Mojos used to incise on their hands and face figures of crocodiles, monkeys, or birds, by means of a fish bone, filling afterwards the incisions with soot or the juice of a tree called *jonoboco*, so that the figures remained for life.[2] These tattooed designs were, no doubt, charms against spirits which were supposed to be incarnated in the very animals they represented. Of the same Indians it is stated, among other things, that they had a "crocodile-dance" which no woman was allowed to attend. If any did so, she would, in Indian belief, be swallowed by a crocodile.[3] From what has been stated about the mask-dances we understand that the object of this crocodile-dance was simply to conjure or propitiate the spirit of some dead person, who was supposed to have been reincarnated in this reptile.

---

[1] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 500.

[2] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, pp. 451, 505.

[3] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 500.

[4] Crevaux, *Voyages dans l'Amérique du Sud*, p. 145.

[5] Crevaux, *op. cit.*, pp. 211, 212.

What has been said of ornamental patterns applied to the body, also holds true of patterns applied to clothes. If the clothes themselves, as I have endeavoured to show, have, by the Indians of tropical South America, originally been worn more from superstitious reasons than as a natural protection against the changes of the weather, it is conceivable that the Indian should try to eke out their prophylactic power by the same magical means to which he so often has recourse in other cases. In this way we have to explain, for instance, the ornamental patterns which some Indians on the Amazon wore on their clothing. Their shirts and trousers, which were made of cotton material, were decorated with painted figures, some representing birds and other creatures, others the sun, the moon, and the stars. The paint consisted of the juice of the *genipapo*. Sometimes their shirts were entirely dyed with this paint, so that they were quite black.[4] This "decoration" cannot have been merely a meaningless game. The patterns were probably charms against evil influences arising from the demoniac animals and objects of nature represented. The fact that even the sun, the moon, and the stars were depicted on the clothing may have been due to similar superstitious ideas held about these heavenly bodies.

In the light of the magical ideas pointed out above, we can also understand the ornamental patterns of two interesting articles of

---

[1] Rivero, *Historia de las misiones de los llanos de Casanare y los Rios Orinoco y Meta*, p. 348.

[2] Eder, *Descriptio provinciæ Moxitorum*, p. 216. [3] Eder, *op. cit.*, p. 338.

[4] Murr, *Reisen einiger Missionarien der Ges. Jesu in Amerika*, p. 528.

Indian clothing, mentioned before, namely, of the broad waist-girdle of the Umáua and of the dancing-apron of the Tuyuka. The former was ornamented with figures in red rosin colour, some representing animal beings, especially fishes and snakes, others the souls of medicine-men. Thus, on the girdle of an Umáua Indian, photographed by Dr. Koch-Grünberg, we find a large spinal column of a fish, two *sucuryú* snakes rendered by a series of square figures, and six figures representing the souls of medicine-men with the hands lifted up in the usual attitude of conjuration.[1] The dancing-aprons of the Tuyuka likewise were ornamented with figures of human spirits, "geometrical" patterns, etc.[2] We know, for instance, that all Indians particularly fear the spirits of their dead medicine-men, which are supposed to be extremely evilly-disposed towards the living. Now, if the object of the ornamental designs painted on clothes were merely to embellish them, the choice of such strange motives would certainly be a great, indeed an insoluble psychological problem. On the other hand, we can understand such ornaments when we know that, according to primitive ideas, the representation of a dreaded being or phenomenon in an image or likeness is a most efficacious means of averting any potential evil influence from the being or phenomenon in question.

In the three-cornered waist-clothings of the Bakaïri women, called *uluri* in the native language, we have another interesting example of a magical garment. The very fact that they were applied to the most critical part of the body, without, however, serving as real coverings,[3] seems to show that they were rather regarded as prophylactic amulets than as natural protections for the genitals. The *uluri*, in my opinion, may be properly compared, for instance, with the cotton cords which were tied round the arms of the Tupi girls at the epoch of their first menstruation, and which, as we have seen, were magical ligatures.[4] The chief object of the *uluri*, accordingly, was to prevent evil spirits from entering the women through the pudenda. The very angular form of these garments was probably not accidental, but due to a definite idea: the triangle itself, as already pointed out, is regarded as a charm. This, too, is indicated by the fact that triangular figures, or other linear ornaments, were, moreover, *painted* on the garment; for the object of this painting, once more, cannot have been to embellish it, but to increase its magical efficacy as a protection against the invisible intruders. Lastly, the ceremonies with which the *uluri* were put on the girls at the attainment of puberty[1] plainly show that they had some mysterious significance.

---

[1] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, ii. 114 *sq.*

[2] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 288, 289.

[3] See v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 194 *sq.*

[4] See the figures in Schmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 393.

In the same way, probably, we have to explain the ornamental waist-clothes of the Carib and Arawak women in Guiana, which consisted of bandages embroidered with beads in different colours, forming beautiful three-cornered figures *à la grèque*.[2]

The decoration of the *walls of houses* with all sorts of ornamental figures seems to be a common practice, at least among the Brazilian Indians. The walls of the large communal houses or *malocas* are usually covered with a layer of bast or rind, upon which the Indians paint or engrave their primitive patterns. Such was the custom, for instance, among the tribes of the Rio Xingú. Thus, Professor von den Steinen and Dr. Ehrenreich inform us that in the huts of the Bakaïri chiefs a frieze of blackened bark tablets, about 56 metres (over 184 feet) in length, ran along the walls, which were painted in white clay with very characteristic figures and patterns. All the geometric figures were in reality diagrammatic representations of concrete objects, mostly animals. Thus, zigzags and waved lines were snakes, and these were quite numerous on the frieze. There was, for instance, a pattern representing the common land-snake, the *agau* or cobra of Brazil. There was, moreover, the huge *sucuri* water-snake or anaconda (*Boa scytale*), as well as a boa-constrictor; the row of rhomboids left on the dark background between two rows of triangles represented the marking of the snake's skin. Rhomboidal marks also signified fishes, namely, the *matrincham*, the favourite fish of the Bakaïri, and the *kurimata* (*Salmo curimata*), whereas triangles indicated the small three-cornered article of women's clothing, the *uluri*.[3] In the interior of an Auetö house, von den Steinen found several black figures incised upon the posts; these represented a snake with the mouth wide open, another kind of snake, a lizard, a *pacú* fish, a small tortoise, a quadruped called *kummayu*, and a monkey.[1] Of greater interest still are the beautiful ornaments which Dr. Koch-Grünberg found applied to the walls of the Indian *malocas* on the Rio Negro and its tributaries. Thus, among the Siusi on the Rio Aiary the front-side of the *maloca*, up to about a man's height, had the rind covering decorated with numerous black designs, representing especially men and animals.[2] Similarly, among the Kaúa on the upper Aiary the outsides of the houses were ornamented with human figures and figures of animals, such as different kinds of jaguar, as well as with bird designs.[3] Besides this ornamentation of the front of the *maloca*, the principal posts in the middle of the house were often covered with peculiar paintings. There was especially one figure which frequently appeared in different variations: it was the torso of a man in full festive attire. The head was adorned with the customary broad band of yellow macaw feathers, from the back of which a big plume of the white heron stuck out. The rest of the patterns also were the same as those which the Indians use in their body-paintings for feasts and dances, and which they likewise apply to their vessels and dancing-staffs. Some of the posts, besides having the front ornamented with these figures, had also on the back patterns representing giant snakes, painted in black, red, yellow, and white colours upon a scarlet ground.[4]

---

[1] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 198.

[2] Schomburgk, *Reisen in British-Guiana*, i. 358. v. Martius, *Beiträge zur Ethnographie Amerika's*, i. 642, 702, 703, note.

[3] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 256, Taf. xx., xxi., p. 90 *sq.* Ehrenreich, "Mitteilungen über die zweite Xingu-Expedition in Brasilien," in *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, Bd. XXII., Berlin, 1890, p. 89.

Now, what is the reason for decorating the houses in this way? That it is not due merely to æsthetic impulses, may at once be inferred from the peculiar kind of ornaments. Many of these, it should be observed—for instance the snake-figures—probably do not, as such, awaken feelings of pleasure among the Indians, nor are they regarded as beautiful. It is interesting to note that most of the animal beings which occur in this ornamentation play a part in the superstition of the natives. This particularly holds true of the fishes and the snakes. Of the fish ornaments I have already expressed the opinion that the predilection which the Xingú Indians showed for them in their art most probably was connected with the fact that the spirits of the dead were often believed to transmigrate into fishes. As to snakes, their extremely common occurrence in the ornamentation of the Brazilian Indians is still more striking, and it is easy to derive this fact from the same causes as make these reptiles play such an important part in the religion and mythology of the natives. The belief in the reincarnation of the dead in animals, so common in South America, seems largely to refer to huge and poisonous snakes in those parts of the continent where such reptiles abound. Ceremonies like the peculiar snake-dance, which Wallace mentions from among the Indians of the Rio Uaupés, are no doubt based upon that belief. The natives had made two huge artificial serpents of twigs and bushes bound together with *sipós* (a climber), from thirty to forty feet long and about a foot in diameter, with the head formed by a bundle of leaves of the *umboöva* (*Cecropia*) painted bright red. They divided themselves into two parties of twelve or fifteen each, and, lifting the snakes on their shoulders, began dancing. In the dance they imitated the undulations of the serpent, raising the head and twisting the tail. During all this time *kaschiri* (the fermented manioc-beer) was being abundantly supplied.[1] Wallace does not tell us what the significance of this snake-dance was, but when we compare it with other similar animal mask-dances in South America we cannot have much doubt on that score. Such dances, accompanied by excessive drinking of some fermented beer, are generally performed after a death, and their object is to conjure or propitiate the spirit incarnated in the animal whose image or figure is brought forth in the procession or dance. The Uaupés Indians most certainly believed that the dead had transmigrated into the giant snake and were propitiating its spirit by the dance. In fact, we shall see later on that the anaconda or boa-constrictor is one of the worst demons known to the South American Indians, and that the sorcerers especially are believed to reincarnate themselves in this huge reptile. Mr. Whiffen relates that, among the Indians visited by him, he once saw a medicine-man with the skin of an anaconda, and was told that "by using the skin he could control the spirit of the anaconda."[2] Now, what, on a certain critical occasion, is attained by such a pantomimic mask-dance, is permanently attained by painting the image of the monster upon the walls or posts of the house. The image serves to keep off the spirit. The Indians certainly have the same natural reluctance to "paint the devil on the wall," as have civilized people. If nevertheless they do it, there can only be some such magical motives for the practice. It is the house itself and its inhabitants that have to be protected against the demons. The dancers therefore move round the *maloca*, pretending *to keep off the demons who are trying to penetrate it.* This is expressly stated by Dr. Koch-Grünberg with regard to the mask-dances of the Kaúa, which took place after a death. The traveller relates that, while some fantastically dressed characters, which had appeared from the forest, danced with quick steps in the open place of the village in twos, or even singly, chanting a mournful song in a dull voice, two other masked men were dancing to and fro on the central walk of the *maloca.* Suddenly the other dancers drew near, howling loudly, and began violently to beat the walls with their sticks, in order to force the entrance. This the masked men inside the house had to prevent. The intruders were, we are told, "the evil spirits who tried to take possession of the house." The same scene was repeated, still more fiercely and violently, at the back-entrance of the house.[1] This very interesting statement, it seems to me, strongly supports the assumption that the ornamental figures painted on the front of the house, and upon the posts, had for their true object permanently to ward off such dangerous invisible visitants. This seems once again to appear from the post ornaments representing an Indian man in festive attire. The ornaments of different kinds which the Indians put on for their feasts and dances—the feathers and plumes, the necklaces, ear- and nose-ornaments, rattles, etc.—as we have seen, have not for their object merely to embellish the appearance. Just as the dances are, as a rule, magical in character, so the dancing ornaments together form a real magical apparatus to conjure the spirits with which the Indians enter into relation during these ceremonies. If this is so, it is easy to understand that, according to the principles of imitative magic, the painted figure of a man in such a festive dress is supposed to have the effect of averting evil influences from the house.

---

[1] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 256.

[2] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 59.

[3] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 109. See also i. 113, 148; ii. 76, 86, 87, etc.

[4] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, ii. 241-243.

---

[1] Wallace, *A Narrative of Travels on the Amazon and the Rio Negro*, p. 296 *sqq.* As to a similar snake-dance among the Passé, see v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 512 *sq.*

[2] Whiffen, *The North-West Amazons*, p. 184.

Moreover, among the Jibaros in eastern Ecuador—who have much the same culture as the Brazilian Indians—I myself found a similar custom, which affords direct evidence of the correctness of the present explanation. These Indians are in the habit of painting upon the doors of their houses small human figures with the hands stretched out, figures of snakes, birds, etc. These figures, according to the information I got, represent the souls of the departed (*wakani*), and are not merely decorations, but have a practical aim. "The departed," I was told, "like to revisit their old houses, and may strike us with sickness and death or other misfortune. But when they find their own images painted upon the door, they are pleased and do us no harm." This is the general Indian way of explaining the fact that the spirits are simply *conjured* and kept at bay by means of the figures representing them.

---

[1] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 133 *sq.*

In some cases, though seldom, the Indians even provide pieces of their poor furniture with decorations which are clearly of a magical nature. We have an instance of this in the divining-stools of the Warraus and Arawaks (called *ha-la* in Arawak), of which Dr. Roth makes the following statement: "The bench differed from the ordinary article of furniture, usually met with in Indian houses, in being larger, often painted, and carved in fanciful designs of various animals. But little is known concerning the why and wherefore of the selection of the particular beast. Thus, I have seen the turtle, alligator, tiger, and macaw more or less faithfully represented on such Warrau and Arawak divining-stools."[1] That the small benches, which the Indians use for initiations and other religious ceremonies, are at least in some cases believed to possess magical powers, I could myself establish among the Jibaro tribes in Ecuador. The stool, upon which the victor has to sit at the feast held in his honour after the slaying of an enemy, is full of mysterious power. It must be made of a special kind of wood, and by a man initiated in the magic art, and before it is used certain conjurations are uttered over it. This stool, however, is not ornamented in any way. The Karayá, again, adorn the footstool upon which the children have to sit, when their ear-lobes are solemnly perforated with macaw feathers, to which no doubt magical virtues are ascribed.[2] As to the *ha-la* of the Arawaks, it is almost certain that the patterns painted on it had a similar magical significance, the more so as the animals represented —tigers, alligators, macaws, etc.—are such as play an important part in Indian superstition. If souls of diviners (sorcerers) are believed to take up their abode in these animals, it is not difficult to understand why their images should be carved or painted on divining-stools.

The ornamental patterns which some Indians apply to their *canoes* and *paddles* are probably to be explained from similar superstitious motives. Thus, among the Bakaïri Professor von den Steinen saw a canoe which was painted with the ring-markings of a ray and with the zigzag lines of an anaconda.[1] Similarly, on a paddle there were incised four figures which represented the rings of a ray (*pinukai*). On the other side of a transversal line followed two *meréschu* in the meshes of a net, then a *pacú*, and finally several *kuomi* fish.[2] Professor von den Steinen believes that the object of this decoration was simply to bring fish close to the paddle, but this is probably not the true explanation. The custom of painting canoes with special ornaments also prevails among the Indians in north-west Brazil. On the Rio Caiary-Uaupés, for example, the canoes were often painted inside with white and yellow patterns, lines, and points. One paddle bore on its blade a human figure with an erected phallus, painted in red colour.[3]

---

[1] Roth, *Animism and Folklore of the Guiana Indians*, p. 329.

[2] See *supra*, p. 112.

The true motive for such decorations is, I believe, assigned by de Rochefort with reference to the ornamented canoes of the Caribs. This old writer not only tells us that the Indians used to wear small wooden images, representing their evil spirits (*maboya*), round the neck in order to keep them off, but moreover makes the following interesting statement: "*Pour detourner de dessus eux la pesanteur de leurs coups et divertir leur rage,* ils font fumer à leur honneur par le ministre de *boyez* des feuilles de tabac; *ils peignent aussi quelquefois leurs hideuses figures, au lieu le plus considerable de leurs petits vaisseaux qu'ils appellent piraugues.*"[4] There is no reason to doubt the correctness of this statement, nor can we assume that the magical idea which de Rochefort mentions was confined to the Caribs. Canoeing on the South American rivers is often a dangerous undertaking, necessitating special precautions. In the rapids and cataracts, where accidents easily occur, the Indians believe evil spirits to be lurking. It is no doubt for the purpose of escaping such mysterious dangers that some natives apply magical ornaments to their canoes and paddles, just as they sometimes paint their own body before they start on long river expeditions.[5] That patterns representing such creatures as water-snakes (anacondas), rays, and fishes, are chosen for this decoration, is naturally due to the belief that the evil spirits in the river are supposed to appear in these shapes. Similarly, the human figure with the phallus was undoubtedly a charm.

---

[1] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 271.

[2] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 269. To another paddle a snake-pattern had been applied, *op. cit.*, p. 271.

[3] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, ii. 85.

[4] de Rochefort, *Histoire naturelle et morale des Iles Antilles*, p. 419. Dr. Roth says that they did this "not only to frighten their enemies, but in order that the spirit's contemplation of its own likeness might divert its attention into other channels" (*op. cit.*, p. 163).

[5] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 282; ii. 86.

Of greater importance, however, is the ornamentation which refers to *pottery*. Many Indian tribes in South America, especially those belonging to the Arawak- and the Guarani-group, as we know, are in the habit of decorating their earthenware food- and water-vessels, as well as their burial jars, with all kinds of ornamental designs, many of which form the most refined productions of Indian art. To a superficial observer nothing seems clearer than that such decorations have for their object merely to embellish the vessels, just as civilized people embellish their plates and cups. Yet there are numerous signs that even this ornamentation is, or originally was, magical in its significance. In fact, if we may say that it is impossible fully to understand the material culture of the Indians without possessing an intimate knowledge of their whole psychology, and especially of their magic and religion, this is particularly true with regard to their pottery and its ornamentation.

There are, in fact, magical ideas connected not only with the designs with which the vessels are decorated, but also with the vessels themselves, and the clay of which they are made. Only from this point of view is it possible to understand certain peculiar customs practised with clay vessels at religious ceremonies.

The mysterious power which the Indians ascribe to their clay vessels, where the original ideas are still kept alive, seems to me to appear most clearly from the following statement by F. H. Cushing, relating to the decorated pottery of the Pueblo Indians. This American anthropologist draws attention to the fact that, on every class of food- and water-vessel in collections of both ancient and modern Pueblo pottery, a singular yet almost constant feature can be observed, namely, that encircling lines, often even ornamental zones, are left open, and not with closed ends. Mr. Cushing adds that he asked the Indian women, when he saw them making these little spaces with great care, why they took so much pains to leave them open. " They replied that to close them was ' fearful,' for this little space through the line or zone on a vessel was the exit trail of life or being. How it came to be first left open, and why regarded as the ' exit trail,' they could not tell. When a woman has made and painted a vessel she will tell you with an air of relief that it is a ‘ made being.’ As she places the vessel in the kiln, she also places food beside it. The noise made by a pot when struck, or when simmering on the fire, is supposed to be the voice of its associated being. *The clang of a pot when it breaks or suddenly cracks in burning is the cry of this being as it escapes or separates from the vessel.* That it has departed is argued from the fact that the vase, when cracked, never resounds as it did when whole. This vague existence never cries out violently unprovoked; but it is supposed to acquire the power of doing so by imitation; hence no one sings, whistles, or makes other strange or musical sounds resembling those of earthenware, under the circumstances above described, during the smoothing, polishing, painting, or other processes of finishing. The being thus incited, they think, would surely strive to come out, and would break the vessel in so doing." Moreover, in their native philosophy and worship of water, the latter is supposed to contain the source of continued life, hence life also dwells in a vessel containing water, and having once held water, and in virtue of having done so, it contains the source of life. " If the encircling lines inside of the eating bowl, outside of the water-jar, were closed, there would be no exit trail for this invisible source of life, or for its influence or breath."[1]

Although this interesting statement refers to an Indian people in North America, I think we have every reason to believe that similar ideas relating to clay vessels have largely prevailed in South America also. Yet there is one point which has to be explained more closely. What is the mysterious " life or being " which, according to the Pueblo idea, resides in the made vessels, which wants an exit trail in the ornamentation through which it can pass, and which separates from the vessel when it breaks, etc. ? Evidently it is nothing but the same magical and spiritual power which the Indian sees in so many other objects that play a part in his religion and superstition. That animate or inanimate objects of nature, or parts of such objects, become magical or charged with a supernatural power when a *human* spirit is supposed to have, in one way or another, been transmitted to them, is a leading principle in the Indian theory of magic of which we have seen various applications in the course of our previous inquiries. Thus, we may also assume that the mysterious virtue which the Indian ascribes to the clay or red ochre, with which he smears or paints his body for ceremonial purposes, is at bottom the same as is also believed to be inherent in pots made of the clay,[1] and which is, as it were, set free when the pot is broken. It is possible that the ceremonial breaking or " killing " of vessels at graves, or on other occasions, is at least in part connected with such ideas.

---

[1] Cushing, *A Study of Pueblo Pottery as Illustrative of Zuñi Culture Growth* (*Fourth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology*, Washington, 1886), p. 510 *sq.*

Of the ancient Indians in Mojos we are told that, when they had succeeded in killing a jaguar, they held a great feast and performed certain peculiar ceremonies, consisting in dancing, drumming, etc., in honour of the animal. Before these ceremonies began, *a woman came and broke a clay vessel in front of the killed jaguar.*[2] That this was done with a special purpose is beyond doubt, and the rest of the ceremonies which took place on that occasion may perhaps throw light upon the practice. The jaguar was regarded as taboo, because it was believed that a human spirit was incarnated in it—a common belief held of jaguars in South America—and the dancing and the other rites had for their object to conjure the reincarnated spirit and to remove the taboo. Considering this, we may assume that the breaking of the vessel was supposed to aid somehow in this conjuration. The spiritual power which was contained in the vessel was released to actuality by breaking the vessel, and was thus believed to neutralize the harmful effects arising from the dead animal.

---

[1] The clay, of which the vessels are made, is often prepared in a way which suggests that superstitious ideas are connected with it. Thus, when we hear that the Tobas are in the habit of mixing the clay *with ashes of burnt bones* (Del Campana, "Contributo all' ethnografia dei Toba," in *Archivo per l' antropologia e la etnologia*, Firenze, 1903, p. 287), we cannot avoid bringing this practice into connection with the magical power which the Indians ascribe to the bones of certain animals, as well as to ashes in general. Similarly, the Arawaks in Guiana mix the clay of which they make their pottery with ashes of the bark of the *caraipe* tree (*Moquilea utilis*) (v. Martius, *Beiträge zur Ethnographie Amerika's*, i. 712). v. Martius says that this is done with a view to making the material stronger, but it is far more probable that some mysterious power is ascribed to the bark of that particular tree, and especially to its ashes. Of the Lenguas Mr. Grubb says that " particular attention is paid to the class of clay employed, and in preparing it they use a mixture of old pottery pounded up " (Grubb, *An Unknown People in an Unknown Land*, p. 72). The same custom also prevails among some other tribes (see Nordenskiöld, *Einige Beiträge zur Kenntnis der südamerikanischen Tongefässe und ihrer Herstellung* [*Kungl. Svenska Vetenskapsakademins Handlingar*, Bd. XLI., No. 6, 1906], p. 7). Among the Quichuas the clay vessel, after it had been dried in the sun, was embedded in *llama's and cow's dung*, and the oven, where the vessel was afterwards burnt, was made of pieces of pottery which had got broken at the fabrication (Nordenskiöld, *op. cit.*, p. 17). Magical virtues are often ascribed to animals' dung, and similarly the peculiar way of making the oven used for the burning must have been due to a special idea. The semi-civilized Indians on the highlands of Bolivia make use of a special kind of white clay, called *pasa*, which is eaten, and of which they also make pots, pitchers, figures of saints, etc. (v. Tschudi, *Reisen durch Südamerika*, v. 222 *sq.*). It seems evident that magical properties are ascribed to this clay. It is, moreover, interesting to note that among the Ijca, living on the Andes in northern Colombia, it is the privilege of the *medicine-men* to make the clay vessels. I am indebted to Dr. G. Bolinder for this statement.

[2] Castillo, *Relacion de la provincia de Mojos*, p. 359.

However, the ceremonial breaking of clay vessels, which is known both from North and from South America, has especially taken place at funerals. Thus, in ancient burial caves and other burial places—for instance, in Peru and Bolivia—pieces of broken clay vessels have been found in quantities which suggest that there have been some special mysterious motives for the practice. In other cases pots have been laid in the graves unbroken, but holes have previously been bored into them. According to a theory held by many archæologists, this has been done in order to set the souls of the pots free, so that they might be able to follow their owners to the other world.[1] I do not know whether any serious attempt has been made to prove this assertion, but there are certainly very few arguments to be adduced in its support. However, these particular cases do not interest us for the moment. What I have reason particularly to point out here is, that when pots or fragments of pots are thrown into the graves, it is not always meant that these things should follow the departed because they want them in the future life as they did in this world. In many cases, at least, there must have been some other motives for the practice.

With regard to the treatment of the dead there are two sets of ideas to be taken into account, which seemingly stand in opposition to each other. On the one hand, it is an undisputable fact that the dead are feared: the demon who has caused the death of a person by taking possession of his body, and who is often vaguely identified with his soul, is supposed to accompany the corpse to the grave and continue to be a danger to other people and especially to the nearest relatives. This is the reason why the Indians generally shun the graves, at least during the first days after the burial. But on the other hand the Indians—at any rate, the more civilized of them—take great care of the bodies of their dead relatives, in the belief that their future rebirth essentially depends on the preservation of their bodily remains.[2] The dead body, and especially the bones, still retain something of the soul, and the Indians, therefore, in these remains see, as it were, the germ of a new human being. As I have pointed out before, the belief in the rebirth of the departed may be taken to manifest itself even in the posture given the body in the grave or the burial jar, this posture often being the same as is that of the fœtus in the mother's womb. Since it is believed that the decomposition of the body is caused by evil spirits, many arrangements are made with the corpse, which aim at protecting it against these supernatural enemies. It is from this point of view that we have to regard many of the things which are laid in the graves along with the bodies: they are not offerings to the departed, but simply *charms or amulets, the object of which is to protect their remains against evil spirits.*[1]

---

[1] Nordenskiöld, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

[2] See *supra*, pp. 33 *sqq.* In addition to the instances there mentioned, the following statement by an anonymous Spanish Jesuit writer of the sixteenth century may be quoted: " The Incas . . . held the opinion that the souls had

It is quite consistent with this explanation that the so-called "grave-offerings" often consist of things which, from a practical point of view, are quite worthless. Thus, the pots which have been found in the graves are in many cases *broken*, and it clearly appears that they were already broken when laid there. Besides the fragments of clay vessels, which form the most common grave-finds, many of the other objects with which the dead have been provided for the journey to the other world are of rather a peculiar kind. Thus Forbes, speaking of the Aymará in Bolivia and Peru, says that "it was the general custom to bury, along with the corpse, articles of pottery, wood, and metal, especially small images or figures of men and animals made of gold, silver, or copper."[2] What

---

to return to their bodies within a certain time, and to be awakened to a new life. They added that this could not be expected unless the bodies had been preserved uncorrupted, and in such a way that nothing was lacking, at least not the bones, when the flesh was consumed, for which reason they took excessive care to inter their defunct embalmed" (Anónima, *Relacion de las costumbres antiguas de los naturales del Piru* [*Tres relaciones de antigüedades Peruanas*], p. 153). The end of the passage, which is somewhat vaguely composed, in Spanish runs as follows: "Añadieron que esto no tenia efecto ninguno, sino es que los cuerpos estuviesen guardados incorruptos y sin que les faltase nada, a lo menos hueso, ya que la carne se consumiese; por lo cual pusieron excesivo cuidado en enterrar à sus difuntos embalsamados." Cp. also Garcilasso de la Vega, *Comentarios reales*, bk. ii., c. 7.

[1] Even many offerings consisting of food and drink, as well as human and animal sacrifices, have conspicuously a magical character. See on this point my chapter on "Magical Sacrifice," *infra.*

[2] Forbes, *The Aymará Indians of Bolivia and Perú* (*Journ. Ethnol. Soc. London*, vol. ii., 1870), p. 48. Of the same peculiar kind were "sacrifices" which the ancient Peruvians used to offer to their *huacas* and other localities which they looked upon with superstition. The true nature of these sacrifices will be examined later on.

the departed should do with "images of men and animals" in the next life is difficult to understand. On the other hand, these "offerings" appear intelligible when we know that, according to the Indian theory of magic, such images are efficacious charms against spirits that have taken the shape of men or animals, and that this efficacy is enhanced when they are made of magical metals like gold, silver, and copper. Many of the objects which Dr. Nordenskiöld found in some Quichua and Aymará graves in Peru and Bolivia are also significant from the same point of view. In these graves there were not only numerous fragments of pottery, but also other peculiar articles: a sort of long pin, called *topo* (*tupu*) in the native language, with which the Indian women are still wont to fasten the shawls over their breasts, broken stone mortars, human images of wood, feathers, pieces of cows' horns, beads, etc.[1] In a grave found in the Ollachea valley there was a roll containing a cob of maize painted green at one end, leaves of coca, excrement of an animal living on vegetables, a tuft of wool, a stick, a piece of bark, and a Christian cross of grass-stalks.[2] That these things should have been laid in the graves merely as offerings to the dead is out of the question. They all illustrate the Indian belief in magical charms; they show us the primitive way in which the natives are trying to protect the remains of their departed ancestors against supernatural destroyers in order to secure their "immortality." Some of the charms mentioned, again, only seem to have served as protections for the living, who are endangered by the spirits when they come in contact with the graves.[3] Pins, arrows, and other pointed objects are still commonly used as amulets in all parts of South America, and the same holds true of pieces of gold and silver, of feathers, of beads, etc., not to speak of cross-figures, which play the same part in the genuinely Indian as in the Christian superstition.[4]

---

[1] Nordenskiöld, *Arkeologiska undersökningar i Perus och Bolivias gränstrakter* (*Kungl. Svenska Vetenskapsakademins Handlingar*, Bd. XLII., No. 2, 1906), pp. 12-21, 27, 32, 39, etc.

[2] Nordenskiöld, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

[3] This is consistent with the belief of the Aymará and Quichua Indians, that in the grave resides the disease- and death-demon, called *chullpa*, who is vaguely identified with the spirit of the dead, and who may invade the person that comes in contact with the grave (Nordenskiöld, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-39). Charms against such *chullpas* are often of later origin, being thrown in the graves by occasional visitors.

[4] As to the large pins, *topos*, which were found in most of the graves examined by Nordenskiöld, there can be no doubt that they have been amulets to keep off evil spirits from the dead, and as amulets or charms they have probably been regarded, even when worn by the Indians in daily life.

At present we are, however, particularly concerned with magical vessels, especially those made of clay, and with their ornamentation. Unfortunately, there are very few instances to be quoted as to how, among the tribes of our own days, vessels are ceremonially broken or "killed" at burials, and even in these cases the true meaning of the rite is somewhat doubtful. Schomburgk makes the following interesting statement relating to a burial ceremony of the Macusis. The dead person, a female, had been laid in the grave, and a rite had been performed, consisting in the relatives surrounding the sepulchre and leaping over it. This was probably to counteract the harmful influences arising from the disease- and death-spirit still residing in the corpse. The widower, who had been present without taking part in this ceremony, now seized a gourd with vermilion, sprinkled it over the corpse, and *thereafter broke the vessel, so that the fragments fell into the grave.* The part which he had held in his hand he withheld and afterwards threw out through the door. Certain other utensils and small articles were, moreover, placed along with the dead body, which was ultimately covered with palm leaves.[1] In this case, we notice, the vessel was not of clay, but a gourd; but it is a well-known fact that magical properties are commonly ascribed to bottle gourds and other forms of fruit-rind. The important part that the red paint plays in Indian superstition has been explained before; and, as we have seen, it is used as a magical protection not only for the living, but also for the dead. But the vessel itself may also have been thought to possess some mysterious power which was believed to benefit the dead in some way when it was broken and thrown into the grave. However, it is also possible that the ceremony with the vermilion was a precaution to protect the relatives themselves against the disease- and death-spirit attaching to the dead body, and that the gourd was regarded as defiled through the taboo of death, and therefore likewise thrown into the grave. In the absence of further information the exact meaning of the rite can hardly be made out.

Again, Mr. Whiffen, speaking of the burial customs of the Indians in north-western Amazonia, states that dead men are buried with their ornaments, arms, tobacco-bags, coca-pots, etc., whereas, when the deceased is a woman, pots are buried with her instead of weapons. Among the Kurétu-language group, when a woman dies, *her pots are broken before they are placed in the grave.*[2] Mr. Whiffen adds that this is done to prevent the return of the soul to ask for its properties, should they be needed in the spirit world; but this is probably only his own supposition. If it were really meant that the vessels should materially serve the woman in the next life as in this, it is not easy to understand why they should be *broken* before being deposited in the grave. The latter fact indicates that there are certain mysterious or superstitious motives behind the practice, which cannot, in this case, be sought merely in the desire to destroy the vessel as infected or tabooed through the death-spirit. The hypothesis may not be too daring that the breaking of the clay pots is ceremonial, in the sense indicated above, and that the " life " they contain is supposed to benefit the woman in some way, perhaps to protect her soul against mischievous demons in the after-life. This is all the more probable as the spirit which the animistic philosophy of the Indians ascribes to clay vessels seems to be conceived as a *female* spirit. Such, at any rate, is the idea of the Jibaros, who endow even objects like weapons, implements, utensils, etc., with indwelling souls, some of which are male, some female. When the Jibaro Indian is narcotized by certain narcotic drinks, the spirits of these objects appear to him in the shape of Indian men or women. *The clay vessel is a woman*, just as the earth itself from which the clay is obtained is regarded as a woman. Hence the women have to make the clay pots and mostly handle them in daily life. This idea has something in common with the belief of the Pueblos, referred to above, and in South America is certainly not limited to the Jibaros. Whatever the true Indian idea may be in each case, it is necessary to point out that both clay pots ceremonially broken at burials, and other kinds of grave-offerings, undoubtedly in many cases have a purely " magical " character. Even when the objects are intended to follow the deceased to the other world, they are certainly not thought to do so *materially*, but only, as it were, " in spirit," and this purpose may, in the case of clay vessels, be effected by breaking them.

---

[1] Schomburgk, *Reisen in British-Guiana*, i. 420 *sq.*

[2] Whiffen, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

That *fragments* of pottery have so often been found along with the remains of the dead, is probably not accidental. It is possible that, at the breaking or " killing " of the clay vessels at the grave, the magical power inherent in them is believed to become actual and afford a protection for the remains of the dead;[1] but evidently such a power is also permanently ascribed to the fragments themselves. Thus it is significant that, in some cases, besides the corpses having been buried in clay jars, fragments of pottery have been thrown round them in the grave.[1] Dr. Koch-Grünberg relates that, among the Siusi, a dead Indian was placed in a coffin consisting of a canoe divided in two, with the fore- and hind-openings closed by large fragments of pottery and pieces of a hearthstone.[2] It is not too bold to assume that in this case both the pottery fragments and the pieces taken from the hearth were believed to possess some mysterious power to protect the corpse against evil influences, or to keep the demon dwelling in the dead body at bay.[3] That fragments of pottery have some mysterious significance seems also to be indicated by a statement of Mr. Grubb's relating to the Lenguas. "Broken pieces of old pottery," he says, "have been found bearing scorings, as if made by the pressure of the thumb, and *are said to be the work of spirits*."[4] But if these seemingly useless things thus have a peculiar importance as charms, their efficacy in this respect is supposed to be greater still *when they bear paintings*—that is, when they have belonged to ornamented clay vessels. Thus, for example, many of the pieces of broken vessels, which Dr. Nordenskiöld found in the graves on the boundaries between Peru and Bolivia, are interesting because of the painted ornaments they show, these consisting of circles, squares, and other geometric ornaments, as well as of snake-formed and spiral lines, human figures (figures of spirits ?),

---

[1] With regard to the " killing " of clay vessels, which consists in boring holes into them, probably another explanation must be given. In this case the idea may be to facilitate the connection between the soul and the remains of the body,

---

especially with the bones. This was the idea Dr. Koch-Grünberg found among the tribes in north-west Brazil (Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 164). In such cases, therefore, the term "killing" is out of place.

[1] This was, for instance, the case with some graves on the Rio Palacios in Bolivia, examined by Nordenskiöld, where numerous fragments of pottery were found round each jar. Outside one grave there was, besides such fragments, a *Spindelscheibe*. In another, certain characteristic "offerings" had been laid: a bronze plate, three silver plates, and beads for necklaces, made of bone (Nordenskiöld, *Urnengräber und Mounds im bolivianischen Flachlande* [*Baessler-Archiv*, Bd. III., Heft 5, 1913], p. 212). These "offerings" were conspicuously magical charms. Similarly, when in one of the mounds Nordenskiöld found outside a burial jar "a head of an arrow or a lance, made of bone, and two mussel shells" (*op. cit.*, p. 230), these objects were probably not *Beigaben* in the proper sense of the word, but amulets, which were believed to protect the corpse against evil spirits.

[2] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 164.

[3] That the hearth itself is magical is naturally due to its connection with the fire. For this reason pieces of clay or stone, taken from the hearth, have likewise a magical power.

[4] Grubb, *An Unknown People in an Unknown Land*, p. 73.

and so forth.[1] It is more than probable that the Indians had intentionally thrown into the graves such pieces of pottery as bore these painted charms.

Even when clay vessels are not broken, but laid whole into the graves—in which case they often serve as shells for the remains of the dead—there are evidently magical ideas connected with them. The " life or being," or rather, the spiritual power, which resides in the vessel, *protects* these remains against the supernatural foes who, according to Indian belief, are trying to destroy them. In America there are, as we know, two kinds of jar interment: either the whole corpse is laid in a big clay jar and buried; or only the bones or ashes of the dead are deposited in smaller urns, which usually are beautifully ornamented.[2] Both modes of interment are apparently suggested by the desire of the survivors to preserve the remains of the departed as long as possible, in order to facilitate their future rebirth.[3] From the same point of view we have to look upon the ornamental paintings or other ornaments with which burial jars are decorated among many tribes. These paintings which, as usual, consist of different sorts of geometric design, or of figures representing animals, human faces, or other parts of the human body, spirits, etc.,[4] have certainly not been prompted by a desire to embellish the jars, but are, in conformity with the above explanation, originally magical symbols. The superstitious intention of this decoration of clay vessels is, it seems to me, rightly suggested by Gonzalez Suarez with reference to the jars found in the graves of the ancient Quillacingas in Ecuador. These Indians ornamented their earthenware pots with various beautiful designs, representing figures of men and animals and combinations of geometrical figures. However, some of the pots, which are of later origin, are ornamented with *cross*-figures, applied opposite each other in the four cardinal points, and these crosses occupy precisely those spots which the animal figures used to occupy. " May not these four crosses," Gonzalez Suarez asks, " have been simply a substitution of the Christian symbol upon the points of the jar where the Indians had been wont to apply figures of the animals which they worshipped in their heathen state ?"[1] In fact, there can hardly be any doubt that in these ornamented jars we have a Christian charm substituted for a genuinely Indian charm, the object of the painted figures being in each case to protect the remains of the dead. Everywhere in South America the Indians have readily adopted the powerful Christian amulet, the cross, and made use of it in their own native superstition, this " borrowing " having been facilitated by the fact that they have amulets of their own which are essentially of the same kind.[2]

---

[1] Nordenskiöld, *Arkeologiska undersökningar i Perus och Bolivias gränstrakter* (*Kungl. Svenska Vetenskapsakademins Handlingar*, Bd. XLII., No. 2, 1906), pp. 13, 15, 20, 21, 31. See also idem, *Urnengräber und Mounds im bolivianischen Flachlande* (*Baessler-Archiv*, Bd. III., Heft 5, 1915), pp. 219, 223, 227, etc.

[2] The first kind of jar-interment has been customary among the tribes of the great Guarani-group, who have especially been scattered over Brazil, Paraguay, and Bolivia. Again, smaller burial urns, in which the bones or ashes of the dead have been deposited, have been current among various tribes in northern South America, on the island Marajo at the mouth of the Amazon, in Bolivia, etc. The Diaguitas, in northern Argentine, used to inter dead children in small, beautifully ornamented jars (Boman, *Antiquités de la région Andine*, i. 151). Cp. also Nordenskiöld, *De sydamerikanska indianernas kulturhistoria*, p. 196 *sq.*

[3] That even the custom of *burning* the dead is founded upon this idea is beyond doubt. Cremation is a radical means of removing the soul of the dead from the machinations of the evil spirits. Those parts of the corpse which are particularly exposed to these foes are destroyed by the purifying fire, but the soul or spirit of the defunct is collected and concentrated in what remains after this treatment, namely, in the ashes. Hence the great care with which the ashes are guarded in urns by the Indians who practise cremation. The custom prevails, for instance, among the Roocooyen Indians in Guiana (Crevaux, *Voyages dans l'Amérique du Sud*, p. 120), and among a few other tribes in northern South America. Cp. also Schomburgk, *Reisen in British-Guiana*, ii. 388 (on the Atorais).

[4] See, for instance, Nordenskiöld, *Urnengräber und Mounds im bolivianischen Flachlande* (*Baessler-Archiv*, Bd. III., Heft 5, 1913), p. 234 and *passim*.

Azara, speaking of the burial custom of the Payaguas, a Guarani tribe in ancient Paraguay, makes the following significant statement: " Ils ont soin d'arracher les herbes sur les sépultures, de les balayer, de les couvrir de huttes semblables à celles qu'ils habitent, et *de mettre sur le tombeau des hommes qu'ils aiment une multitude de cloches ou de pots de terre couverts de peintures, les unes sur les autres, et l'ouverture en bas*."[3] These numerous painted pots, " piled up one upon the other on the tombs of beloved persons," cannot be conceived as offerings to the dead, for such an endowment with clay vessels would be meaningless. It seems clear that they were laid upon the tombs for the same mysterious purpose that clay vessels, or fragments of such, often serve in the Indian religion and superstition.

---

[1] Gonzales Suarez, *Los Aborigenes de Imbabura y del Carchi*, p. 64 *sq.*

[2] Thus, for instance, we hear of the heathen Chanés, in northern Argentine, that they are in the habit of painting red crosses upon the heads of their dogs in order to protect them against madness (Nordenskiöld, *Indianerleben*, p. 184). The cross is, in this case, of Christian origin; but the idea that such and similar figures afford protection against supernatural evils is genuinely Indian, as well as Christian. Of the Abipones Dobrizhoffer relates that they had crosses tattooed upon their foreheads, although they had never been in contact with Christianity (Dobrizhoffer, *An Account of the Abipones*, ii. 20).

[3] Azara, *Voyages dans l'Amérique méridionale*, ii. 143 *sq.*

Other kinds of ornaments may serve the same aim as paintings. Thus, the Warraus on the Orinoco, according to Father Gumilla, had the following peculiar burial custom. When an Indian died, his body was tied by a strong rope and thrown into the river, the rope having previously been fastened to the trunk of a tree. The following day the fishes (called *guacaritos*) had already entirely gnawed off the flesh as well as other softer parts from the corpse. The relatives now took up the skeleton, which was white and clean, separated the bones with minute care, and put them in a basket which was kept ready for the purpose, and which was *elaborately ornamented with glass beads in various colours*. The basket was thereafter suspended from the ceiling in the house among other similar coffins containing the remains of dead ancestors.[1] Here the coffin, ornamented with many-coloured glass beads, offers an interesting evidence of the Indian view with which we are dealing, namely, that even the dead need magical protections against mischievous spirits. The careful treatment of the bones was inspired by the belief that something of the soul of the defunct was left in them, and that therefore, through these bones, if they were well guarded, he could be reborn in the future to a new earthly life.[2]

The Chorotis in Chaco, who bury the dead in a reclining posture, are in the habit of placing at each end of the tomb a clay pot partly filled with water. These clay pots, partly filled with water, are not meant as offerings to the dead, for such offerings are completely unknown to the Chorotis. It is more probable that they are placed upon the tomb from some other superstitious reasons, and that a supernatural power is ascribed to them which is supposed to keep off the death-demon. As to water, it is beyond all doubt that it plays a part in Indian magic in connection with clay vessels. The idea of the Pueblos that water contains the "source of life," and that therefore life also dwells in a vessel containing water, is probably familiar to the South American Indians, being, as it is, fully consistent with the importance which, at any rate, is commonly ascribed to this fluid as a magical means of purification. The idea that a clay vessel containing water has a special supernatural virtue is particularly clear with regard to the magical drums which are used by many Chaco tribes, for instance by the Matacos and the Chorotis. These drums consist of a simple clay pot, *which is partly filled with water*, and is covered with a goat's or deer's skin. The water in this case does not serve any apparent practical purpose. We may, therefore, assume that it is simply believed to augment the magical power which is inherent in the clay pot, and which emanates from the drum when it is beaten.

---

[1] Gumilla, *Historia natural, civil y geografica de las naciones del Rio Orinoco*, i. 199.

[2] That the Indians really believe that the dead may be revived through their bones, is shown by Nordenskiöld's experience among the Quichuas at Queara. When he was in search of Indian crania and skeletons, the natives believed that he wanted to take the skeletons with him to his own land and revive them, to reveal the secrets about the gold-mines of the Incas (Nordenskiöld, "Ethnographische und archäologische Forschungen im Grenzgebiet zwischen Peru und Bolivia," in *Zeitschrift f. Ethnologie*, Bd. XII., 1906, p. 89).

There is sufficient ground for assuming that the ornamentation applied to food- and water-vessels, cooking-pots, dishes, etc., has originally had the same magical significance as that applied to burial-jars. Fully to understand this, we must consider that to the Indian eating and drinking is always a more or less ceremonial business, owing to the general belief that, with the food and drink which man consumes, evil spirits may obtain entrance into the body and cause disease and death. The prevalence of this belief is best testified by the custom of fasting, which takes place on all occasions when the Indians fancy that they are particularly attacked by their supernatural enemies. The Indians mostly take their meals in silence; they do not speak to each other, and do not like to be spoken to. It is possible to explain this from the point of view that keeping silence is regarded as a means of evading the spirits. The custom, prevailing among most Indian peoples, that the women must eat separately from the men, may be due to the same superstition, for women are believed particularly to attract evil spirits.

That the vessels from which the Indians eat and drink are considered to have a special mysterious importance, appears from the custom of destroying such utensils on certain critical occasions, especially after a death, a custom which must be distinguished from the ceremonial "killing" just dealt with. Thus, among the Chaco tribes the water-pitchers, plates, and drinking-cups of the defunct are always destroyed together with the rest of his property. The same is reported from many other parts of South America. Among the Roocooyen Indians in Guiana, for example, the clay vessels of the deceased husband are smashed by his widow,[1] and similarly we are told of the Indians in the ancient province of Maynas in Ecuador that they used to break the pots and plates which the defunct had used.[2] The Apiacas in Brazil, after a death, burn weapons and cotton implements, while vessels are destroyed.[3] In such and similar cases the destruction of the clay vessels is simply due to the consideration that they are polluted or infected by the death-spirit, and therefore can no longer be used.[4] By eating or drinking from them the surviving relatives would expose themselves to the danger of being invaded by the death-bringing demon. That such ideas have led to the practice may also be inferred from a statement relating to the Siusi. " As soon as death has taken place," we are told, " all pots in the house are emptied and all eatables destroyed. Until the dead has been buried, the survivors are allowed to eat only manioc-bread and pepper."[5] Again, of the Lenguas we hear that when, after a death, the near relatives have entered a new village, they are closely muffled up, and live apart for the space of one month, " taking their food alone, and never sharing in the common pot."[6] Why are the mourners thus kept secluded, and forbidden to " share in the common pot " ? No doubt because they are tabooed or polluted through contact with the corpse, the disease- and death-demon, who is supposed to be still with them, making it particularly dangerous for other people to eat together with them. Similar precautions with regard to eating- and drinking-vessels are taken on other critical occasions also. Thus, among the Macusis, when a girl has her first menstruation, she is believed to infect everything with which she comes in contact. A medicine-man removes the taboo by blowing upon the more valuable things, muttering an incantation. "*Pots and drinking-gourds which she has used are destroyed, and the fragments buried.*"[1] The fact that the Indians, after a death or on some other critical occasion, seem to be more anxious to destroy food- and water-vessels than other things of their property is not only due to the ceremonial character of eating and drinking, but probably also to the idea that a magical object is more dangerous when polluted by evil spirits than ordinary objects.

---

[1] Crevaux, *Voyages dans l'Amérique du Sud*, p. 121.

[2] Figueroa, *Relacion de las misiones de la Compañia de Jesús en el pais de los Maynas*, p. 251.

[3] v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 404. Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 165.

[4] The same explanation holds true of other things, weapons, implements, clothes, etc., which are destroyed—usually burned—after a death. Thus, among the Aymará and Quichua Indians, eight days after the death a great drinking-feast is held, whereupon certain things, " which the departed has need of in heaven "—for instance, implements, pots, food, clothes, and brandy—are burnt on an open place (Nordenskiöld, *Einige Beiträge zur Kenntnis der südamerikanischen Tongefässe und ihrer Herstellung* [*Kungl. Svenska Vetenskapsakademins Handlingar*, Bd. XLI., No. 6, 1906], p. 22). Nordenskiöld's opinion, that the departed " needs these things in heaven," and that " the souls of the objects are set free, so that they may be able to follow their masters," cannot, however, be correct. In this case there is only a question of destroying dangerous articles which are infected through the contact with the death-demon, while some of the " offerings " have for their object simply to neutralize the evil influences arising from this demon by virtue of the magical power they possess. This especially is the case with the brandy-offering, since brandy is regarded as a powerful antidote against evil spirits.

[5] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 165.

[6] Grubb, *op. cit.*, 169.

Under such circumstances it is not difficult to understand that the Indians should try to protect the pots in which they prepare their food, as well as their eating- and drinking-vessels, with the same kind of magical charms as they apply to other objects of their property. In fact, it is only in this way that we can satisfactorily explain, for instance, the frequent occurrence of such "decorations" as figures of evil spirits in the ornamentation of clay vessels. Thus, I have already mentioned that the Lenguas are in the habit of engraving upon their gourds, used for holding water or food, among other things, figures representing the forest *kilyikhama*, a being so intensely feared that Indians lost in the forest are known to have gone mad through fear of encountering its apparition.[2] The ornaments painted upon the gourds of the *Paressi-Kabiji*, according to Dr. Max Schmidt, were "human and animal figures, quite naturalistically represented." Dr. Schmidt adds that in each figure a special idea was expressed. Thus, for instance, one gourd was ornamented with a human figure, provided with large claw-like hands, of which the Indians assured him that it was one of their demons, the "god" *Tokulo*. Of animal beings, the ant-bear, the guata monkey, lizards, and others were represented.[3] Of great interest are the ornamented eating and drinking plates and cups, which Dr. Koch-Grünberg describes with reference to the tribes in north-west Brazil. The pots always had the outside painted, the plates, on the other hand, being painted inside. The ornaments consisted of human figures, or figures of spirits, figures of animals, birds, alligators, monkeys, etc., and also of designs which were purely geometrical. The figures applied to the bottom of the plates were most conspicuously charms, consisting of circles with peculiar lines and marks, X-shaped ornaments, fylfots or many-footed crosses, etc.[1] The fact that similar ornaments were applied to purely magical instruments, like rattle-gourds and dancing-staffs, makes it still more certain that they were not meant to be decorations, but had for their object to keep off evil spirits from the food. The fylfot has been used as an ornamental design in many different parts of the world, especially among Indo-European peoples,[2] and has probably everywhere had a magical significance.[3] As to animal figures, I have pointed out before that the Indians first of all represent such animals in their ornamental art in which they believe that the spirits of the dead reincarnate themselves.

---

[1] Schomburgk, *op. cit.*, ii. 316. Similar precautions are sometimes taken after a birth. Cp. Wallace, *A Narrative of Travels on the Amazon and Rio Negro*, p. 496: "When [among the Uaupés] a birth takes place in the house, everything is taken out of it, even the pans and pots, and bows and arrows, till the next day."

[2] See *supra*, p. 224.

[3] Schmidt, "Reisen in Matto Grosso im Jahre 1910," in *Zeitschrift f. Ethnologie*, Bd. XLIV., 1910, p. 170.

A particular importance is evidently attached to the decoration of such drinking-vessels and gourds as are used at ceremonial drinking-feasts. Since the fermented intoxicating beer is regarded as sacred, and believed to be filled with a divine spirit, the drinking-feasts mostly assume a magical or religious character, being, in fact, a kind of conjuration. This is the reason why they, as a rule, take place on certain particularly critical occasions, as at childbirth, at marriage, at the puberty of girls, and especially after deaths. Considering this, we can understand why those peoples who practise ornamental pattern-painting use their most beautifully ornamented clay vessels and drinking-gourds at their drinking-feasts. Such was the custom, for instance, among the Chiriguanos. At their *chicha-* or maize-beer-festivals the women took pride in presenting the beer in the most beautiful clay vessels they had, and the gourds from which it was drunk were likewise always finely ornamented.[4] The *arete* or *chicha-*

---

[1] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, ii. 229, 235, 236, 238, 239.

[2] See Haddon, *Evolution in Art*, p. 282 *sqq.* Helm, *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte*, i. 169.

[3] Cp. Helm, *op. cit.*, i. 171: "Heilige, schützende, übelabwehrende Zeichen." Dr. Helm speaks of the use of the triskele and the tetraskele or fylfot in the decorative art of the ancient Scandinavians.

[4] Nordenskiöld, *Indianerleben*, p. 234.

feasts of the Chiriguanos had a markedly ceremonial character, and at least formerly they took place in connection with festivals, the object of which was to conjure the *añas* or spirits of the dead.[1] Similarly, among the Indians of Rio Negro it seems to have been customary to drink the *kaschiri* or manioc-beer from " beautifully ornamented " clay cups or gourds.[2] The *kaschiri*-beer was especially consumed at death-feasts and was a sacred drink.

The magical principles pointed out above find a special application in a kind of ornamentation which has often attracted the attention of travellers in South America, *viz.*, the *rock-engravings.* In many parts of the continent, especially in Guiana and Venezuela, in the Amazonian district, in Peru and in Chile, rude figures representing men and animals, fishes, reptiles, etc., have been found engraved or painted upon high desolate cliffs, upon rocks situated by cataracts in the rivers, and other conspicuous places. As to the meaning of these rock-engravings many hypotheses have been ventured both by ancient and modern travellers, although mostly at random and with little knowledge of the facts bearing on the subject.

In a recent work on the South American rock-engravings, Dr. Koch-Grünberg has not only given an account of their geographical diffusion in that continent, but also taken great pains to show that they have no religious or mysterious significance whatever. Dr. Koch-Grünberg especially combats the view that the rock-engravings were a sort of " picture-writing," in the sense of being intended to communicate some knowledge to posterity. When, for instance, a canoe is overset in a cataract and some Indians lose their lives, the survivors simply desert the place as quickly as possible, in order to escape the demon who caused the death of their fellow-tribesmen, but they do not sit down for hours to " picture " the accident upon the rock as a warning to those who pass there afterwards. Again, when masks and mask-dancers have been depicted upon the rocks, the intention of the artists has not been to maintain the memory of tribal feasts. It may be that the Indians have just returned from a mask-dance, and have, half in play, half deliberately, engraved upon the rocks these objects which still filled their whole thinking, and so forth. The conviction at which Dr. Koch-Grünberg has arrived during a two years' stay among the Indians is that the rock-engravings have " seldom or never " had any deeper significance than to be merely " playful manifestations of a naïve artistic sense."[1]

---

[1] See Karsten, *Indian Dances in the Gran Chaco* (*Öfversigt af Finska Vetenskaps-Societetens Förhandlingar*, Bd. LVII., 1914-1915, Afd. B, No. 6), p. 23 *sq.*

[2] See Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 169: " Immitten des Hauses waren zwei *schön bemalte Tonschalen* mit Kaschiri die offenbar besprochen wurden." Cp. ii. 228. Cp. also Wallace's description of a *kaschiri* drinking-feast at the " snake-dance " of the Uaupés. " During all this time caxiri was being abundantly supplied. An old man comes forward *with a large newly painted earthen pot*, which he sets down in the middle of the house " (Wallace, *op. cit.*, p. 298). A new and newly painted clay vessel naturally has a stronger magical power than an old one. When, among the Macusis, the sorcerer prepares the *curare* with which the Indians poison their arrows—a preparation connected with certain religious ceremonies, since a spirit is believed to reside in the poison—he only, we are told, operates " with pots and pans (*Geschirre*) that have not been used before " (v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 658).

This opinion is certainly consistent with the view Dr. Koch-Grünberg takes of Indian ornamental art as a whole, which, as he sees it, is simply an expression of their æsthetic sense—a view held by most ethnologists. But it is not quite consistent with the *tiefere Bedeutung*, which he himself allows to the Indian mask-dances, nor with the statements of several travellers which indisputably show that the rock-engravings, as a matter of fact, are still regarded with superstitious awe by the natives. The inference is not difficult that, just as masks and mask-dances have a magical and religious significance, so the same must be the case with the *figures* of mask-dancers which the Indians sometimes engrave on rocks, and that, similarly, engraved animal figures have some connection with the custom of representing animals in mask-dances. The correctness of such an inference is confirmed when we examine more closely on what sort of places such figures are engraved.

For my own part I hold that the rock-engravings really may be said to represent the elements of picture-writing, but in another sense than the one in which Dr. Koch-Grünberg uses the term. Most probably, what we call picture-writing did not have originally for its object to communicate directly some intelligence about things and incidents, but had first of all a magical significance. It was simply a charm to keep off evil influences of one kind or another. It is only later on that animal figures, and other similar designs, have been intended to denote something by their arrangement, and to give information. To this stage, however, the South American Indians have nowhere attained in their rock-engravings. These cannot, therefore, be regarded—as some travellers have done—as remains from a higher culture once reigning in South America,[1] but are all magical ornaments of the same primitive kind that the Indians still commonly apply to objects of their property as well as to their own bodies.

---

[1] Koch-Grünberg, *Südamerikanische Felszeichnungen*, p. 68 : " Spielende Äusserungen eines naiven Kunstempfindens," or p. 75 : " Die müssigen und rohen Anfänge primitiver Kunst." As to the author's own explanation, see especially pp. 68-73.

That an experienced ethnologist like Dr. Koch-Grünberg has failed to recognize the true nature of the Indian rock-engravings and tried to make out that they are nothing but meaningless pastime scribblings, is all the more strange as passing travellers, like Crevaux and the brothers Schomburgk, have rightly expressed the opinion that they must have some mysterious meaning and stand in some connection with the Indian belief in spirits. Crevaux briefly points out that the Indians, before they start on a journey, cover their body with paintings which, according to their own statement, have for their object to frighten away death-bringing demons, and that these paintings are of exactly the same kind as the ancient rock-engravings. He therefore draws the conclusion that both kinds of paintings have the same religious significance.[2] A statement by Richard Schomburgk bears out by unmistakable evidence the religious or superstitious ideas which the Indians entertain in regard to such rock-engravings. On the Taquiari or Comuti mountains at Essequibo, in British Guiana, the traveller saw two gigantic stone pillars, one of which bore several "Indian sculptures." "Our Indians," says Schomburgk, "were seized by trepidation and timidity when they passed here for the first time, for they regarded these pillars as the habitation of an evil spirit. For the traveller to behold its *belle-vues* provokes the anger of the mischievous goblin, and the death of the curious visitor in the nearest rapids is the revengeful work of this monster. . . . As soon as, therefore, we came into the neighbourhood of the fatal rock, a quantity of tobacco-juice was sprinkled into the eyes of the novices. The intense pain caused by this corrosive lye naturally prevented them from opening the eyes and glancing at the feared watches. It was not until we had passed the dangerous places that the anxious fellows were allowed to wash their eyes. Every striking formation of a stone mass is to the Indian the abode of an evil spirit, and he would never pass such a place without the greatest anxiety." Schomburgk adds that when he and his party did not care to take these precautions, the Indians expected that they would instantaneously perish.[1]

---

[1] This, for instance, was the opinion of Richard Schomburgk and of v. Humboldt. See Schomburgk, *Reisen in British-Guiana*, i. 317 *sq.* v. Humboldt, *Reise in die Aequinoctial-Gegenden des neuen Continents*, iii. 80: "Spuren einer alten Kultur der Eingeborenen" (see also iv. 131, 132).

[2] Crevaux, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

On his journey to the Roraima mountains the same traveller discovered a whole series of " picture-writings," representing human figures, caymans, and snakes, engraved upon plumb walls of sandstone. When the Indians saw these figures they exclaimed in a subdued voice: " Makunaima, Makunaima " (God, God !).[2] Again, von Martius states that when, on the cataract of Araracoara, his Indian companions became aware of five figures of human heads engraved upon a granite rock, they approached them with awe, passed their forefingers along the half-decayed lines, and exclaimed, " Tupana " (God !).[3] Similarly, Dr. Koch-Grünberg himself was told by the Indians that the rock-inscriptions which he found on the Rio Içána were " made " by a Tupana, the " god " being in this case a tribal hero of the Tukanos.[4]

Still more clearly the religious significance of the rock-engravings is brought out in a statement by the Catholic missionary, Father Rivero, relating to the Salivas on the Orinoco. Upon a high rock, he and some other missionaries found certain " sculptured figures," traced with so much " art and disposition " that the pious Fathers only could assume these " images and idols " to have been made with the aid of the Devil, especially as they were applied to so high and inaccessible a rock that it seemed inconceivable why men should voluntarily have mounted to such a height. " In these painted images," says the Father, " the demon gave responses to the Indians through the medium of their priests, who consulted them like an oracle in their troubles and doubts." He adds that after the missionaries entered into these regions, the "diabolic responses ceased."[1]

---

[1] Richard Schomburgk, *Reisen in British-Guiana*, i. 328 *sq.*

[2] Schomburgk, *op. cit.*, ii. 225. Robert Schomburgk had the same experience as to the superstition of the Indians when he tried to split a rock bearing engraved figures in order to take a piece with him. " Meine Verwegenheit rief die grösste Seelenangst unter der armen Mannschaft hervor. Hier in der Wohnung der Geister selbst erwarteten sie jeden Augenblick Feuer vom Himmel hearabfallen zu sehen um unsere Tollkühnheit zu bestrafen " (Robert Schomburgk, *Reisen in Guiana und am Orinoko*, p. 147).

[3] v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 575.

[4] Koch-Grünberg, *Zwei Jahre unter den Indianern*, i. 203. Cp. ii. 55.

Now such instances, it seems to me, irrefutably show that the rock-engravings really have, or once had, a mysterious meaning. Dr. Koch-Grünberg's remark that it is, after all, quite immaterial where these engravings or paintings are found, since they are everywhere but insignificant proofs of the primitive Indian art,[2] is not at all to the point, for, as we find, they are on the contrary *always applied to such places as are regarded as the seats of spirits.* Thus, if we know that, in Indian belief, cataracts and rapids in the rivers are the favourite abodes of evil spirits, and that accidents happening there are due to their mysterious operation,[3] we have here a natural explanation of the fact that, for instance, in the Amazonian district, on the Orinoco, and in Guiana, most engravings are found on rocks situated near such dangerous cataracts.[4] The existence of the said belief has been established by Dr. Koch-Grünberg himself. Thus, he tells us that one of the most dangerous demons which the Kobéua conjure in their mask-dances is a blue butterfly (*tatáloko*); his abode is in the Jurupary-Cachoeira (rapids) of the Rio Caiary, where he brews malaria in a large pot of the kind the women use for preparing the *kaschiri*-beer, with the consequence that all who drink of the water fall ill. Epidemics of malaria are, in fact, known sometimes to occur on the river above the cataract.[5] When such ideas prevail among the Indians, there can be little doubt, for instance, as to the significance of the figures of mask-dancers which Dr. Koch-Grünberg found engraved on the rocks at the rapids of Tipiaca, on the Rio Caiarý-Uaupés, and which represented a butterfly and the carrion vulture.[6] In the real mask-dances the masks are believed to conjure the demons whom they represent; similarly, the painted figures of mask-dancers are, according to magical principles, believed permanently to act as charms against the spirits. And—to mention one instance more—when at the Carurú-Cachoeira the same ethnologist found an engraved figure of a *yararáca*, one of the most poisonous snakes in South America,[1] I think we may connect this with the fact that the Kobéua among their numerous masks also had one representing the *yararáca* snake.[2] The Indians thus regarded this poisonous snake as a demon—an incarnation of a departed spirit—and most probably had engraved its figures on a rock at the dangerous cataract with the same view as they had represented it in their mask-dances, namely, to conjure it and render it harmless.

---

[1] Rivero, *op. cit.*, p. 277.

[2] Koch-Grünberg, *Südamerikanische Felszeichnungen*, p. 75.

[3] Cp. Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, p. 70. Cp. Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p. 380.

[4] Koch-Grünberg, *loc. cit.* Idem, *Zwei Jahre unter den Indianern*, i. 225. Coudreau, *La France équinoxiale*, ii. 195.

[5] Koch-Grünberg, *Zwei Jahre unter den Indianern*, ii. 182.

[6] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, ii. 70.

But cataracts are not the only places which in Indian belief are haunted by mischievous demons. As we have seen before, all nature is peopled with such invisible supernatural beings, and certain mysterious places, such as high and desolate mountains and cliffs, are especially regarded as their dwelling-places.[3] This is the reason why engravings are often applied high up on walls of mountains and rocks which can only be reached with difficulty. Thus, some of the "picture-writings" which Wallace found on the mountains of Montealegre on the Amazon, were situated "on a perpendicular rock rising from the top of a steep, stony slope, which almost deterred me from getting up to them. . . ."[4] A. von Humboldt states that, between the Cassiquiare and the Orinoco, the "hieroglyph writings" are engraved "high up on walls of the mountains, where one can only get by means of a very high scaffolding."[5] Dr. Nordenskiöld makes a similar statement with regard to the painted figures which he found on a wall in the mountains at Calla in Bolivia.[6] Such facts, too, speak strongly against the explanation presented by Dr. Koch-Grünberg and some other ethnologists, that the figures have been engraved on the rocks merely to pass away a leisure hour, or out of an impulse of imitation.[7] If these had been the only motives for the "ornamentation," the Indians would certainly not have applied it to places so inaccessible that they could only be reached by means of special stages or scaffoldings.

---

[1] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 149.

[2] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, ii. 185.

[3] Dr. Koch-Grünberg states that after the mask-dances are finished, the demons are supposed to return to their dwelling-places, which are mostly situated upon a *high mountain*, or in a cataract (*op. cit.*, ii. 174). *Idem*, "Die Maskentänze der Indianer des oberen Rio Negro und Yapura," in Archiv für Anthropologie, Bd. IV., 1906, p. 294. See also v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 574. That mountains and hills and solitary rocks are in South America everywhere regarded as particularly the abodes of evil demons, will be shown in detail in another chapter.

[4] Wallace, *A Narrative of Travels on the Amazon and Rio Negro*, p. 152.

[5] v. Humboldt, *op. cit.*, iii. 62.

[6] Nordenskiöld, *Arkeologiska undersökningar i Perus och Bolivias gränstrakter, 1904-1905* (*Kungl. Svenska Vetenskapsakademins Handlingar*, Bd. XLII., No. 2, 1906), p. 54. Idem, *Forskningar och äventyr i Sydamerika*, p. 110.

[7] See also Nordenskiöld, *Arkeologiska undersökningar*, p. 53. Andree, *Ethnographische Parallelen und Vergleiche*, p. 259.

Caves are occasionally ornamented with similar engraved figures. On the mountains at Corani in Peru Dr. Nordenskiöld found a cave, the walls of which were filled up with engraved figures representing animals—especially the animal most often occurring in the ornamentation of the highland Indians, the llama; but also red deer and dogs—as well as human beings with arms stretched upwards. Over some of the figures Christian crosses were painted in red colour. Moreover, quids of coca, of the kind the Aymará Indians commonly use as "offerings" to the spirits, were found stuck to the walls all over the cave.[1] The significance of these figures is not obscure: they are all charms against demons incarnated in llamas, deer, and other animals. The Indians believe that gloomy caves are haunted by spirits,[2] and this belief is especially natural to the Aymará, who not seldom bury their dead in caves. Even the quids of coca stuck to the walls, and the crosses painted over some of the animal figures, make it perfectly certain that we are dealing with charms to counteract the evil influences arising from these mysterious beings.

In fine, the rock-engravings must be wholly explained by the superstition of the Indians, by their deep-seated belief in evil spirits and their theory of magic or witchcraft.[3] When they have to pass dangerous cataracts in the rivers they are persuaded that malicious demons are on the alert to do them harm and to cause their destruction. The demon resides in the rock situated at the fall, but it may also appear outside it in the river, in the shape of an alligator, an anaconda, a ray, or some aquatic animal, or as a jaguar, a tapir, or a deer, which happens at the moment to be seen roaming about in the neighbourhood, or perhaps only as a seemingly harmless butterfly fluttering above the place. If an accident happens, the superstitious natives at once declare that some of these demons have brought it about, and in order to secure themselves against such misfortunes they, as usual, have recourse to their "occult science." They consequently engrave or paint the figure of the dreaded demon upon a rock or flat stone at the critical place, believing that thereby they are able, as it were, to nail it to the place and wholly to deprive it of its power. They try in the same way to secure their safety when passing mysterious mountains and cliffs, menacingly rising by the roadside, or when entering into haunted caves. Although the engravings mostly consist of animal figures, other kinds of protective charms are also made use of. Thus the picture-writings which Wallace found on the Amazon and the Uaupés not only represented mask-dancers and different kinds of animals, as alligators and birds, but also domestic utensils, canoes, concentric circles, squares, and other geometrical figures.[1] Similarly, Dr. Nordenskiöld, at Calla in Bolivia, not only found human figures and figures of llamas and other animals, but also crosses, **S**-formed figures, and concentric circles.[2] Since many domestic utensils—especially weapons, and implements, and clay pots—are regarded as being in themselves amulets against evil influences, the occurrence of such designs in the rock-engravings is not unintelligible. Similarly, crosses, circles, squares, and other geometrical figures, as we have seen, are regarded as charms, and probably for this reason are used in the ornamentation.

---

[1] Nordenskiöld, *op. cit.*, p. 52 *sq.*

[2] During his last journey in Bolivia Nordenskiöld found numerous ornamented caves. They were believed to be haunted by spirits (*añas*) and were looked upon with superstitious fear by the natives (Nordenskiöld, *Forskningar och äventyr i Sydamerika*, pp. 30-36).

[3] At the Americanist Congress at Stuttgart in 1904 A. Plagemann of Hamburg rightly expressed the view that the rock-engravings have some religious significance, stating, with special reference to the "pintados" in Chile, "dass unter ihnen keines angetroffen wurde das als Zeugniss einer Profankunst aufgefasst werden darf, wenn auch frühere Berichte dass Gegentheil behaupten; dass keines durch blossen Spieltrieb, Nachahmungstrieb veranlasst wurde, ebenso wenig durch den Drank nach Mitteilung geschichtlicher Ereignisse; dass sie sammt und sonders—selbst die erheiternd anmutenden naiven Darstellungen—tief religiös gedacht sind" (Plagemann-Hamburg, "Über die chilenischen Pintados," in *Intern. Amerikanisten-Kongress Stuttgart*, 1904, Ergänzungsband, p. 82). However, such general statements, of course, do not avail much. The principal thing is to show wherein the religious character of such rock-engravings lies.

That the engraved figures, which are in essence charms against spirits, are even *identified* with them is due to the same reasons as cause the masks to be identified with the demons they represent. By the conjuration the spirits are compelled actually to enter into the objects or figures which are made in their likeness. Hence the superstitious fear which the Indians display of coming in close contact with them and doing violence to them; they thereby, according to their own belief, come in contact with the demons themselves and provoke their anger. The statements of the brothers Schomburgk, quoted above, are significant in this respect. Some sculptured stones which Dr. Nordenskiöld found in the Sina valley in Peru are also interesting as illustrating the idea of taboo attaching to such fetishes. Upon large loose stones, which seemed to have been intended for building purposes, certain animal figures were chiselled out in high or low relief. Most of the figures represented venomous snakes which are common in the district, but also jaguars and fishes. Nordenskiöld intended to take some of these sculptured stones with him, but the Indians refused to carry them for superstitious reasons, just as they were very reluctant to point out where such stones were to be found. He rightly remarks that this probably was due to the same fear as makes the Indians shun the graves: sickness and misfortune may be the consequence of the outrage done to the spirits.[1] In fact, the fear and awe with which such engraved or enchiselled figures are regarded is the best evidence in support of the theory set forth in these pages with regard to their origin and nature.

---

[1] Wallace, *op. cit.*, pp. 151, 152, 524. A. von Humboldt, likewise, among the rock-engravings, found not only animal figures, tigers, crocodiles, boas, etc., but also figures representing the sun and the moon, and implements (see v. Humboldt, *op. cit.*, iii. 62; iv. 131-132).

[2] Nordenskiöld, *Arkeologiska undersökningar*, p. 53. Cp. Idem, *Forskningar och äventyr i Syd amerika*, pp. 30-33.

A closer examination of the rock-engravings thus only confirms the view we have taken of the Indian ornamental art in general. When the Indians apply patterns from men and animals, or purely geometrical designs, to their own bodies and their belongings, and even to objects of nature, they have not originally been led to this "decoration" by any ideas of "Beauty," but by superstitious motives. Since such motives are also conspicuous in reference to other ornaments, used for personal decoration, it may justly be said that in South America Art has merely been the handmaid of Magic, and that the ornamentation of the Indians is properly to be studied in connection with a study of their religious and magical beliefs.

---

[1] Nordenskiöld, *Arkeologiska undersökningar*, pp. 50-52.

CHAPTER IX

INDIAN CONCEPTION OF ANIMAL SPIRITS

IN the course of my investigations I have frequently had occasion to refer to the Indian belief in metempsychosis, or the reincarnation of human souls in animals and plants. In fact, one of the leading principles in my statement has been that such natural objects and animals are especially regarded as magical, *i.e.*, as filled with supernatural power, in which human spirits are supposed to have taken up their abode. In the present and the subsequent chapters I propose to give a more detailed account of the Indian conception of animal spirits, plant spirits, and spirits of inanimate objects. I am aware that at present such an account can only be incomplete. Our knowledge of the religious ideas of the South American Indians is, on the whole, scanty and numerous tribes are still totally unknown. Yet the data we are able to gather on this point may be sufficient to throw light upon Indian animism and the current beliefs in a transmigration of souls. In this chapter I shall examine the ideas prevailing in regard to different animal beings which hold a place in their religion or superstition.

In connection with the belief in metempsychosis I shall add some further facts, illustrating the practical consequences of this doctrine with regard to the magical ideas and customs of the natives. Moreover, the same doctrine of metempsychosis will, I hope, throw some light upon the much-disputed question of totemism, a form of primitive religion which is known to exist among a few tribes in South America also, although the northern continent of the New World is to be regarded as its proper home. There are, as we shall find, certain facts which tell in favour of the assumption that among the Indians totemism is essentially based on the belief in the transmigration of souls.

The doctrine of the transmigration of souls is closely connected with the Indian theory of generation of which I shall give an account in a subsequent chapter. According to this theory, human souls, disembodied after death, temporarily take up their abode either in some inanimate object of nature or in living beings of—as we should think—a lower order, in animals and plants, being again, after some lapse of time, reborn in the shape of men. Since the animal world, with which the savage lives in so close contact, naturally impresses him more than other objects of nature, it is not difficult to understand that his theory of reincarnation especially applies to animals, just as the totems are in most cases animal beings of some kind, as quadrupeds, birds, reptiles, fishes, and even insects. Such ideas are found to prevail throughout the South American continent from Tierra del Fuego to Guiana.

Thus the Onas of the mainland, according to Sr. Gallardo, not only believe that departed spirits transmigrate into different inanimate natural objects—heavenly bodies, mountains, etc.—but also into animals. Of these certain birds and fishes, as well as the guanaco, are mentioned. The guanaco has been a woman, *i.e.*, the souls of women are especially believed to reincarnate themselves in this animal.[1] The Onas thus have the same idea about the guanaco as is held about the deer in other parts of South America. When in their mask-dances, which have a thoroughly religious significance, the Onas use a dress made of guanaco's skin,[2] we may connect this custom with that belief. Among the Araucanians we find the idea which is characteristic of all really totemic peoples, namely, that the souls of a group of kindred persons are always thought to transmigrate into one and the same kind of animal. In this way, it seems to me, we may interpret the statement of the Jesuit Father Falkner, according to which the Araucanians had a multiplicity of deities, "each of whom they believed to preside over one particular caste or family of Indians. . . . Some make themselves of the caste of the tiger, some of the lion, some of the guanaco, and others of the ostrich, etc. They imagine that these deities have each their separate habitations—in vast caverns, under the earth, beneath some lake, hill, etc.—and that, when an Indian dies, his soul goes to live with the deity who presides over his particular family."[3] Falkner's statement refers to those Araucanians who in the eighteenth century lived on the Argentine pampa, and which he calls " Moluches." But the same ideas were held by the Araucanians of Chile. Father Rosales, who lived for more than thirty years among these Indians, states that when a child was born they drank to its health, " calling it by the name which they had given it on account of its descent. Some are of the descent of the lions, some of that of the tigers, some of that of the eagles, and of other birds; others [have the names of] fishes, trees, stones, plants. . . ."[1] For my own part, I believe that the real character of the animal spirits with which the newborn child was associated must be viewed in the light of the ideas which are commonly held in South America about animals such as the jaguar, the lion (puma), the deer, etc., as well as about birds and fishes and even inanimate objects of nature.

---

[1] Gallardo, *Los Onas*, p. 338.

[2] Gallardo, *op. cit.*, p. 336. Among the Patagonians the sorcerers, at the feasts held in honour of girls at puberty, among other ceremonies, play flutes made of the thigh-bones of the guanaco (Musters, *At Home with the Patagonians*, p. 81). The power evidently ascribed to the bone of the guanaco among these Indians may point to a similar belief about the animal.

[3] Falkner, *A Description of Patagonia*, p. 114.

What has been stated about the guanaco in a still higher degree holds true of the llama or Peruvian sheep which, in olden times, seems to have been the object of a real worship among the mountain Indians in Peru and Bolivia. The regular use of the llama as a sacrifice to the Sun and to other higher gods, the power of foretelling future events ascribed to it, the *mana* or supernatural virtues attributed to its tallow and to certain other parts of its body, and last, but not least, the frequent occurrence of the llama in the ornamental art of the Andean Indians, are also facts that illustrate the sacred character of this animal. This sacredness evidently was intimately connected with the theory of metempsychosis held by the Peruvian Indians.[2] In my chapter on the Indian sacrifices I shall have an opportunity to deal again with the religious significance of the llama.

Among quadrupeds which play a part in the religion and mythology of the South American Indians, the jaguar and other animals of the feline family are of particular interest. Ideas about a " man-tiger " seem to be current among the natives in all parts of the continent where this ferocious beast occurs. Thus, the Indians in the valleys of Calchaqui in the province of Catamarca, as well as in the province of Salta in northern Argentine, have regarded the jaguar with superstitious fear, because it has been believed that some of them are *uturúncus*, *i.e.*, men that have been changed into tigers.

---

[1] Rosales, *Historia General del Reyno de Chile*, i. 166.

[2] See, for instance, v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 468. v. Tschudi, *Peru. Reiseskizzen*, ii. 238. As to the power of divination ascribed to the llama, see Molina, *Relacion de las fabulas y ritos de los Ingas*, p. 14.

The word *uturúncu* ("man-tiger") is Quichua, and the superstition seems to have especially prevailed among the Quichua-speaking peoples of the Andes from Peru to the Argentine. Thus, when certain healing effects have all over the mountain regions been attributed to the fat of the *uturúncu*, this belief is no doubt due to the animal being regarded as a "magical" beast. *Uturúncu* fat is, for instance, looked upon as an infallible remedy against "bone-ache" and rheumatic pains.[1] Similarly, it is certainly due to magical ideas that among the Aymará the "Kena-Kena," a group of religious dancers, wear "a sleeveless jacket made of the skin of a jaguar."[2] Legends about a man-tiger (*yagua-ava*) have also been widespread among the peoples of the great Guarani-group in northern Argentine, Paraguay, and Bolivia. Thus, the Cainguá, on the Upper Paraná in Misiones, believe that a tiger which roams about in the neighbourhood of a burial-place is nothing but the buried dead person, who has been changed into this animal.[3] The Chiriguanos or Avas in Bolivia are in the habit of burying an Indian who has been killed by a jaguar, with the head downwards, believing that otherwise he will reappear as a tiger.[4] The Itonama Indians in the same land especially fancy that the sorcerers transform themselves into this beast,[5] an idea which, as we shall see, is commonly held about jaguars by the natives of South America. Thus, the Chorotis in Chaco believe that a sorcerer may even in his lifetime change himself into a tiger, which will appear from the forest and kill people. The Tobas say that unless the proper funeral ceremonies are performed over a dead Indian, he is likely to reappear as a tiger and do harm to his living relatives. A "tiger-dance" which is performed by these Indians at a certain time of the year is also founded on the belief in a man-tiger.[1] In fact, the idea seems to be universal among the Chaco tribes that a tiger which visits a village at night-time, and fetches away or kills some one of its inhabitants, is an incarnation of a malevolent human spirit, often the spirit of a sorcerer or medicine-man.

---

[1] Bandelier, *The Islands of Titicaca and Koati*, p. 104. Bandelier states that the use of the *uturúncu* in aboriginal medicine is ancient (p. 156). Cp. also Nordenskiöld, *Indianerleben*, p. 12. Idem, *Forskningar och äventyr i Sydamerika*, p. 159.

[2] Bandelier, *op. cit.*, p. 103. As to the worship of the jaguar and of other beasts of the feline family in ancient Peru, see also Kunike, "El jaguar y la luna en la mitologia de la altiplanicie Andina," in *Inca, Revista trimensal de estudios antropologicos*, vol. i., No. 3, 1923, p. 568 *sqq.*

[3] As to these and similar beliefs, see especially Ambrosetti, *La legenda del yaguarete-aba* (*El Indio tigre*) (*Anales de la Sociedad cientifica Argentina*, Tomo XLI., 1896), p. 321 *sqq.*

[4] Nordenskiöld, *Indianerleben*, p. 219.

[5] Nordenskiöld, *Forskningar och äventyr i Sydamerika*, p. 315. Cp. also pp. 229, 258.

Various facts to the same effect could be mentioned from other parts of South America. Thus, among the tribes of the Rio Xingú, ideas as to the reincarnation of the dead in tigers seem to be current, as appears from a statement, quoted above, relating to the Bororô. These Indians, according to Professor von den Steinen, celebrate the killing of a jaguar with a great feast, at which the teeth and the skin of the animal are given to the nearest relative of the Indian man or woman most recently dead. The teeth and the skin of the jaguar were, no doubt, according to magical principles, believed to act as protecting charms for the relatives against the spirit of the dead, who might possibly have transformed himself into a jaguar.[2] The fact that the teeth and claws, as also the skin, of the jaguar are by many South American tribes credited with supernatural virtues and worn as ornaments, is probably—as pointed out before[3]—to be explained from this belief. The Kobéua in north-west Brazil have the same superstition as the Itonamas and the Chorotis in Bolivia, namely, that the medicine-men are especially able to change into jaguars, both in their lifetime and after death. Dr. Koch-Grünberg relates that if a sorcerer gets very old so that he can only walk with difficulty, he goes into the forest and is turned into a tiger, which will kill and eat both animals and men. He returns from the forest and becomes a man again. When he dies he is changed for ever into "a very bad jaguar."[4] Captain Whiffen, speaking about the Indians of north-west Amazonas in general, makes some very interesting statements about the medicine-men and their relation to the jaguars. Among these Indians "hairiness is a necessary qualification for any man or youth who is desirous of attaining the position of medicine-man. He is certainly the only man in the tribe with any face hair." Mr. Whiffen, moreover, points out that this custom is connected with the belief that when a medicine-man dies he returns as a tiger. "Even during his lifetime he can make excursions in tiger-form, and be so absolutely a tiger that he can slay and eat the beasts of the wild. Every medicine-man possesses a jaguar's skin that he is said to use when he turns tiger. By possession of a skin he has the power of resuscitating the tiger, he himself being the spirit of the tiger. He can thus work his will, afterwards returning to human form." The power to return after death in the shape of the dreaded jaguar is also a defensive measure, a precaution against hostile peoples, as in this shape, both before and after death, the medicine-man can attack the tribal enemies, and carry obnoxious individuals away into the bush whenever opportunity offers.[1]

---

[1] See Karsten, *Indian Dances in the Gran Chaco* (*Öfversigt af Finska Vetenskaps-Societetens Förhandlingar*, Bd. LVII., 1914-1915, Afd. B, No. 6), pp. 8-9. Idem, *The Toba Indians of the Bolivian Gran Chaco* (*Acta Academiæ Aboënsis*. Humaniora, iv., 1923), p. 43.

[2] See *supra*, p. 123. Cp. also, on the Charruas, *supra*, p. 188.

[3] *Supra*, p. 124.

[4] Koch-Grünberg, *Zwei Jahre unter den Indianern*, ii. 155.

These ideas about the greatest carnivorous animal of South America essentially agree with those I have myself found to prevail among the Indians of western Amazonas, in eastern Ecuador. Each of the different tribes living in these regions—the Jibaros, Canelos Indians, Záparos, Napo Indians, etc.—seems to regard the tiger as an evil demon, especially as the reincarnation of the spirit of a medicine-man. This belief is not only held of the jaguar, but of the smaller species of the feline family as well. Among this class of demoniacal animals the Jibaros mention the following: the *soacha*, or great black jaguar, which is the largest of the South American felidæ and was formerly common in the Ecuadorian forests; further, the *shia-shia*, *yambinga*, *yawára*, different kinds of the spotted jaguar; the *hapayawára*, puma, or South American lion; and lastly, the *amicha*, *yantána*, *undúchama*, different kinds of smaller tiger-cats. All these beasts are superstitiously feared, because it is believed that the souls of the medicine-men reincarnate themselves there in order to kill or otherwise harm their enemies. Even in his lifetime a sorcerer is supposed to be able occasionally to transform himself into a jaguar or a tiger-cat, in order to bewitch other people, and he takes this shape particularly after death. If a jaguar attacks and kills an Indian, or if he only takes one of his swine or dogs, it is immediately clear to the rest that an inimical sorcerer has been operating, who took the form of the beast to carry out his evil designs. Likewise, medicine-men in the form of jaguars or tiger-cats are believed to send disease. Hence, when a medicine-man is curing a patient, he mentions, among different demoniacal animals which are supposed possibly to have sent the evil, the jaguar and the tiger-cat also.[1] Further, these beasts figure among the animal demons which appear to the Jibaro Indian when narcotized by *maicoma* or *natema*—two magical drinks used by these Indians—and which are called *arútama* (" the Old Ones "). These tiger-demons are thus in their nature nothing but dead ancestors.[2]

---

[1] Whiffen, *The North-West Amazons*, p. 182.

Ideas much the same prevail among the Quichua-speaking Canelos Indians. One of their most formidable demons is the *puma supai* (the tiger-demon), which is mostly looked upon as a sorcerer in animal disguise. There are " natural " tigers and demoniacal tigers, the latter being such as attack man or do him harm.[3] Among the Colorados in western Ecuador I have found the same belief about the jaguar, and there is little doubt that it is universal among the Indians in tropical South America.[4]

Enough has been said about the Indian ideas of the man-tiger. If we examine the nature of other animal spirits we find that they, too, are closely connected with the doctrine of metempsychosis. As to the Chaco tribes, the ideas and superstitions in vogue among the Tobas are of particular interest. They believe not only that the departed may reappear as tigers, but, moreover, fancy that the souls of dead Indians may transmigrate into ostriches. On this point it is interesting to know that the Tobas have been, by some of their neighbours, called by a name which simply means " Ostriches," or the " Ostrich-men." Thus, the Matacos call them *Uanhlai*—*i.e.*, "the Ostrich-men," *uánhla* being the Mataco word for " ostrich."[5] Again, the Quichua-speaking peoples in Argentina formerly called the Tobas *Juris* or *Suris*, on account of their fame as runners. *Suri* is the Quichua word for " ostrich."[1] The Tobas, moreover, told me a myth from which it appears that, in their belief, persons of different sex and different age may after death reincarnate themselves respectively in different animals. The myth, in an abbreviated form, runs as follows: A long time ago there was a big fire which devastated everything on the earth. The Tobas saved themselves by taking refuge in a great excavation which they made in the ground. Here they remained for some days until the fire stopped. When they rose from the pit they were advised by a sorcerer how to behave in order to escape from the dangerous vapours still emanating from the earth. Everybody, on leaving the pit, had to cover his eyes with a cloth; if he neglected to do this he would be changed into an animal. A young Toba man who would not cover his eyes would be changed into an ostrich; an old man would be changed into a stork or a big heron; a small boy into a rabbit. A young Toba woman who neglected to cover her eyes would be changed into a deer; an old woman into an ant-bear; and a Toba girl into a pig. If they covered their eyes nothing would happen to them, they would rise from the pit unscathed. Evidently it was thought that the evil spirit inherent in the vapour would penetrate into the eyes, with the result that the person in question would die, and his soul transmigrate into one of the animals mentioned—into an ostrich, a stork, a rabbit, a deer, an ant-bear, a pig.[2] That the young Toba men were supposed to be changed into ostriches is quite in accordance with the fact just mentioned, that the Tobas have long been called the "Ostrich-men" by their neighbours. It is also interesting to note that young Toba women were believed to be changed into deer. The idea that the deer—like the guanaco among the Fuegians—is a *female* animal is found among several tribes in different parts of South America.

---

[1] See Karsten, *The Religion of the Jibaro Indians* (*Boletin de la Academia Nacional de Historia*, vol. iii., No. 6, 1922), p. 12 *sqq.*

[2] Karsten, *Beiträge zur Sittengeschichte der Südamerikanischen Indianer* (*Acta Academiæ Aboënsis.* Humaniora, 1920), p. 50 *sqq.*

[3] Karsten, *The Religion of the Jibaro Indians* (*op. cit.*), p. 14.

[4] Thus, the same belief in a close spiritual relationship between an evil-minded sorcerer and a jaguar prevails among the Guiana Indians. The sorcerers firmly believe themselves to be able to turn into jaguars, assuming the "guise of a jaguar." In this guise they may kill or harm people, but also appear as the assistants of the medicine-men who are curing patients. However, both in Guiana and in other parts of South America, the sorcerers may also take the form of giant serpents, venomous reptiles, or other animal beings (see Koch-Grünberg, *Vom Roroima zum Orinoco*, Bd. III., *Ethnographie*, pp. 200, 201, 211, 218, 381).

A peculiar custom of the Tobas with regard to eating the meat of the ostrich is probably connected with the belief that some dead Tobas reincarnate themselves in this bird. On the occasion when the daughter of a great chief reaches puberty and the customary ceremonies have been performed in her honour, a banquet and drinking-feast is held, at which all the men eat ostrich meat, whereas all the women eat armadillo. Evidently the armadillo is particularly regarded as a female animal—that is, believed to possess a woman's soul—just as the ostrich is regarded as being a masculine bird. In all these ideas and practices we find a near approach to a totemic system.

---

[1] Karsten, *The Toba Indians of the Bolivian Gran Chaco* (*Acta Academiæ Aboënsis.* Humaniora, iv., 1923), p. 43.

[2] Karsten, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

The Mataranes, one of the ancient tribes in Paraguay, used to celebrate an annual festival of the dead, and part of the festival consisted of a solemn procession in which each deceased person was represented by a dead ostrich. All the relations and friends of the departed who assembled on this occasion were expected to bring as many dead ostriches as they had dead kinsfolk to mourn. The festival lasted four days, and on the fourth day lamentations for the dead were held for the space of one hour.[1] The meaning of this ceremony is not doubtful. Such annual festivals of the dead are celebrated by many tribes in Chaco. The departed are supposed to appear in great numbers, especially at the time of the ceremonial drinking-feasts during the algaroba season, and the Indians then endeavour to conjure them and keep them off in various ways. The " ostrich-dance " of the Mataranes can only be explained by the belief, no doubt held by these Indians, that the souls of their dead relatives transmigrated into ostriches, and the whole ceremony was based on exactly the same principles as other mask- and totem-dances in America: the Indians tried to conjure or magically influence the spirits through imitating them in their external appearance and movements.

Among the Chorotis the belief in metempsychosis is less marked than among the Tobas and many other Chaco tribes, but not altogether unknown. Thus, we have already seen that they share the common Indian belief in a man-tiger. Moreover, an evil wizard is supposed to be able to send his soul into a horse, in which shape he will kill the person whom he wishes to bewitch. The horse is therefore regarded as a demoniacal animal. Similarly, the deer is looked upon with superstitious awe, and its flesh is not eaten; it is said to be a *mohsek*. *Mohsek* is the Choroti name for an evil spirit or demon. Although there are facts which speak in favour of the assumption that the *mohsek* are in their nature human souls,[2] there does not appear to be, in regard to the deer, any belief in a real transmigration of souls. The Chorotis simply share the idea, common in South America, that the deer is an evil spirit or demon.

---

[1] Charlevoix, *Histoire du Paraguay*, i. 462.

[2] Thus, the souls of certain persons, especially of old men and of sorcerers, become *mohsek* after death. The demons are supposed to have the shape of old men.

Mr. Grubb, speaking of the religion and superstition of the Lenguas, incidentally remarks that they do not believe in a transmigration of the souls.[1] This may be true if we think of the transmigration of souls as a regular system of thought. That the idea itself is not, as has not formerly been, wholly foreign to the Lenguas, seems to me to appear from some facts which Mr. Grubb mentions. Thus, when he states that " the lower creation, with the exception of fish and serpents, are supposed to share immortality with men," and that " birds, cattle, and the carnivora, especially of the leading types, figure largely in their beliefs of the shade-world, as also the dog, jaguar, horse, ostrich, and the thunder-bird,"[2] these ideas may be interpreted as indications of a belief in metempsychosis. The statement that certain animals " share immortality with men " probably refers to that idea of an essential spiritual relationship or identity between men and animals, which is characteristic of the Indian view, and which in its turn is founded on the belief in metempsychosis. Whereas there are plenty of evidences from all parts of South America of a belief in the reincarnation of human souls in animals, there is no clear evidence of an animal soul as essentially distinct from a human soul. The Lenguas probably form no exception to this general rule. It is to be regretted that Mr. Grubb has not made more detailed statements about the religious ideas of the Lenguas, of which he evidently knew much more. When Mr. Grubb relates that these Indians, before they go out to hunt the ostrich, rub the arrow-points with a particular herb to propitiate the spirit of the bird, and, when they bring the carcase home, take certain other precautions with the same view,[3] we here find an indication of the same superstition in regard to the ostrich as is current among some other Chaco tribes and the Patagonians. Moreover, the supernatural power which the Lenguas ascribe to ostrich feathers and which explains their use as charms at their religious ceremonies,[4] is no doubt connected with the idea of the ostrich as a " magical " bird. Again, about the horse the Lenguas seem to have much the same superstition as the Chorotis, with which they are closely related in their general culture. The Indians greatly fear the spirit of the horse, and this is especially manifest in the superstitious dread with which horse bones are regarded. A native does not even like to handle them. Horses are never killed, even if they are in such a condition that it would be merciful to do so.[1]

---

[1] Grubb, *An Unknown People in an Unknown Land*, p. 121.

[2] Grubb, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

[3] Grubb, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

[4] See *infra*, pp. 85, 220.

The Cainguá, a Guarani tribe on Upper Paraná, believe that when a man dies he goes to see the highest god, *Tupa*, and that on the other hand the souls which cannot separate themselves from earth incarnate themselves in various animals. This belief is confirmed when an animal is seen in the neighbourhood of the burial-places; then the old men go out and try to frighten it away by shouting. The belief in metempsychosis is carried so far, we are told, that some of the Cainguá refuse to eat the flesh of the swine, saying of this animal: *Carai-cue*—*i.e.*, " He was a man."[2]

Other peoples of the Guarani-group hold a similar doctrine of metempsychosis. Thus, according to the belief of the Avas (Chiriguanos), the souls of the dead are at first brought to a sort of paradise called Ibuoca (a valley to the north of the river Pilcomayo), where they stay for some time. Leaving the Ibuoca, the soul transmigrates into the body of a fox. When the fox dies, the soul reincarnates itself in a field-mouse; and when the field-mouse dies, it enters a tree-trunk, which is supposed to be its last abode. Since the fox is believed to be the incarnation of a human soul it is regarded as a god or demon (*Aguaratunpa*) and greatly feared. Its flesh is not eaten, and its ululation at night is supposed to be a bad omen.[3] A Catholic missionary relates that one day when he was talking with a woman of the tribe who had left her daughter in a neighbouring village, she startled at the sight of a fox passing near, and exclaimed: " May it not be my daughter who has died ?"[4] Just as the fox-god, so the armadillo-god (*Tatutunpa*) plays an important part in the mythology of the Avas, and its divine, or rather demoniacal, reputation is evidently due to the same reasons as that of the fox-god. The word *tunpa* in the Guarani language means " great "; the attribute is therefore added to deities of significance. Like *Aguaratunpa*, *Tatutunpa* has been an *aña*—*i.e.*, the spirit of an Ava man or woman, which has been associated with the armadillo and credited with supernatural powers.[5] The Chané Indians, who are Arawaks, but have assumed the culture of their neighbours, the Avas, have much the same ideas about animal spirits as the latter Indians, and it is a fundamental dogma in their religion that "all animals have once been men."[1] Again, of the Guarayús who also belong to the Guarani-group, we are told that they especially regard certain birds with great respect and do not touch them nor eat their flesh, saying that they are "from the land of the grandfather" (the shade-land),[2] an expression which seems to suggest a similar superstition in regard to animals to that prevailing among the Avas and the Chanés.

---

[1] Grubb, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

[2] Ambrosetti, *Los indios Caingua del alto Paraná*, p. 82.

[3] Del Campana, *Notizie intorno ai Ciriguani* (*Archivio per l'antropologia e la etnologia*, 1902), p. 119.

[4] *Lettres edifiantes et curieuses*, nouvelle edition, viii. (Paris, 1781), p. 335 *sqq.*

[5] Nordenskiöld, *Indianerleben*, pp. 257 *sq.*, 264, etc.

Among the tribes in the virgin forests of tropical South America, especially in the Amazonian lowland, the ideas of metempsychosis seem to be particularly well marked. Thus the Mosetene Indians in north-east Bolivia formerly believed in man-tigers, and still fancy that the dead transform themselves into monkeys, dogs, mules, and other animals. "All animals have once been men." Dr. Nordenskiöld relates that when a Mosetene Indian, named José, died, his tribesmen thought that he roamed about in the village in the shape of a dog; and when the dogs barked they said: "José's soul has not left yet."[3] The civilized Moropas, among other beliefs, have the idea, familiar to many Indian tribes, that the deer is a woman who has transformed herself into that animal, and in their myths the deer sometimes appears as a woman, sometimes in its true animal shape.[4] The religious ideas of the Itonama Indians are also of great interest with regard to the question we are dealing with. In their mythology spirits of a sort called *chokihua*, who are in their nature souls of dead Itonamas, play an important part. There are not only *chokihuas* in certain inanimate objects, in the earth and in plants, but also in some animals. These animals "have once been men." Certain birds—for instance, humming-birds and doves—are *chokihua*, and, when they appear, are regarded as omens of death. The same holds good of a beautiful black day butterfly, called *lapo-lapo*. An owl (*oshi*) portends misfortune with its hooting, and a black bird (*úcala*) steals the souls of men so that they die. Similarly the boar, the boa-constrictor (called *úyúla*), and the howling monkey (*Mycetes*), have once been Itonama Indians, for which reason the Itonamas do not eat their flesh.[5] Although the Itonamas do not appear to have any totemistic system in the proper sense of the word, we find among them the ideas which no doubt underlie totemism everywhere in America. The prohibition against eating animals in which human souls are believed to be incarnated is, as we know, familiar to most Indians.

---

[1] Nordenskiöld, *op. cit.*, p. 260.

[2] Cardús, *Las misiones franciscanas entre los infieles de Bolivia*, p. 75.

[3] Nordenskiöld, *Forskningar och äventyr i Sydamerika*, pp. 254, 262.

[4] Nordenskiöld, *op. cit.*, pp. 277, 278.

[5] Nordenskiöld, *op. cit.*, pp. 312, 318.

Numerous instances illustrating the Indian belief in animal spirits may be gathered from Brazil. We need only read, for instance, the account Professor von den Steinen gives of the religious or superstitious practices of the Xingú tribes, to realize what a central place the doctrine of metempsychosis holds in primitive Indian religion. Almost every quadruped, bird, or fish, which has any importance as food, is regarded as the temporary or permanent abode of a disembodied human soul. Thus the Bororó identify themselves with red macaws: the Bororó are macaws, and the macaws are Bororó. The souls of both men and women are believed to transmigrate into this bird. Consequently they never eat macaws, and never kill the tame ones, and if one of them dies they lament for it. The white macaws they kill for the sake of their gorgeous feathers, and for the same reason they sometimes deprive the tame ones of their feathers. This, however, takes place under certain precautions, the bird being painted yellow with a tree juice which is applied to the spots whence the feathers are plucked. Again, the departed members of other tribes are transformed into other birds. The negroes, for instance, become black *úrubú* vultures; the white man may be changed into a white heron, etc. But besides this identification of men with certain birds, there are various quadrupeds and fishes, of which the same superstition is held. Thus the Bororó believe that their medicine-men, or *baris*, reincarnate themselves in the very animals which are most valued as food. Such animals are the tapir, the head of which is particularly taboo, the capibara or waterhaas, the deer, the cayman, and the tiger. All these animals are tabooed as food in their natural condition, and require a special ceremony which removes their harmful qualities. When the animal has been killed, it has at first to be " blessed " (*i.e.*, conjured or propitiated) by a *bari*, before its flesh can be eaten. Any Indian who ate the flesh of the animal without its having been " blessed " would soon die. The deer holds a special position in the superstition of the natives. Some eat it after it has been propitiated; others, again, would die if they did so. The animal is therefore seldom killed, even if it comes quite near the village. A similar belief is held of certain kinds of fish. Among fishes which could not be eaten before the due ceremonies had been performed with them, Professor von den Steinen particularly mentions the *jahu*, the *pintado*, and the *dourado* or golden fish, all of which are particularly large and delicious. To eat any of them without propitiating it previously is considered so risky that if there is no *bari* present to " bless " the fish caught in the net, it must be released at once; whoever infringes this rule will soon die. The " blessing " is a conjuration of the usual kind. The medicine-man (*bari*) leans over the fish or animal, blows upon it, beats it on all sides, sprinkles it with spittle, shouts in its open mouth, etc.[1]

As to the ideas underlying these practices there cannot be any doubt. Since the souls of dead Indians—especially the souls of the *baris*—are reincarnated in the birds, fishes, and animals, these are taboo and cannot be eaten. The death or sickness of the person who eats of their flesh is interpreted as an act of revenge on the part of the animal killed, or rather, of the spirit incarnated in it.[2] This is, in fact, the most common kind of taboo in all South America; and ceremonial fasting, as we have seen, is in many cases due to fear of coming into close contact with the dangerous spirit. The medicine-men, of course, are specially qualified for removing the taboo, not only because of their knowledge in the magic art in general, but also because the spirits to be conjured are supposed to be the souls of dead *baris*. After the conjuration, the medicine-men are the first to taste of the flesh, as if to show that it is now harmless as food, and they especially keep such parts of the animal's body as are regarded as most dangerous to eat.

Both the ideas of reincarnation held by the Bororó and the rites with which they sought to propitiate the game killed offer many interesting points of resemblance to the corresponding ideas and rites of strictly totemic peoples in the northern continent of the New World. The macaw, into which the souls of the dead Bororó are believed to transmigrate, could, in fact, be called the totem of these Indians, and the rites performed in " honour " of the dead animals are in essence the same as the totem ceremonies of the North American peoples. On the Xingú, dancing also forms part of the hunting-feasts,[1] and these, moreover, seem not seldom to be connected with mask-dances in which certain quadrupeds, birds, or fishes are imitated Exactly in the same way in North America, certain animals are conjured or magically influenced by mimicking mask-dances. The difference is that, in North America, these animals are mostly totems of the clan,[2] whereas on the Xingú, any kind of game in which spirits of the dead are believed to be incarnate are made objects of conjuring ceremonies.

---

[1] v. d. Steinen, *Unter den Naturvölkern Central-Brasiliens*, pp. 491-493, 511, 512. Waehneldt, "Exploracão da provincia do Mato Grosso," in *Revista Trimensal*, xxvii., 1864, p. 216.

[2] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 492. Cook, *Through the Wildernesses of Brazil*, p. 408.

The particular importance which the Bororó ascribe to the feathers of the macaw is evidently connected with the fact that the souls of their dead kinsmen are supposed to be incarnated in this bird. The feathers are therefore—according to principles pointed out before—impregnated with spiritual or magical power. The painting of the bird, on the occasion when its feathers are plucked out, is probably a means of precaution against the spirit.

Just as the Bororó identify themselves with red macaws, so the Gayatacazes believed that after death their souls transmigrated into the body of the bird *sacy* (*Coracina ornata*), which thus was, in a manner, the " totem " of these Indians.[3] The Içanna Indians also believe in the transmigration of souls. The souls of the brave transmigrate into beautiful birds, whereas those of the cowardly pass into reptiles.[4] The Tecunas on the Rio Marañon " believe in the transmigration of human souls after death in other bodies, even those of irrational animals." So we are told in another of those short, summarizing accounts, which von Martius gives us of the religious ideas and customs of the Brazilian Indians. The further statement that in the mask-dances of the Tecunas animals like the tiger, the deer, the tapir, various kinds of birds, and even an insect, the *Ixodes* or tick, were imitated and conjured,[5] gives us an idea of the sort of creatures to which their theory of reincarnation applied.

---

[1] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, pp. 298, 320, 493.

[2] Yet in North America also magical rites resembling the totem ceremonies are sometimes performed with animals which are not totems. For instance, the Cherokee in the region of the Alleghany Mountains, perform certain conjurations with eagles and snakes, which are regarded as supernatural beings, although they are not Cherokee totems (See Mooney, *Myths of the Cherokee* [*Nineteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, i.], p. 281 *sqq*). These rites are most probably based on the same belief as the corresponding rites of the Xingú tribes, namely, that the souls of departed Indians are embodied in the eagles and the snakes.

[3] v. Martius, *Beiträge zur Ethnographie Amerika's*, i. 303.

[4] v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 602.

[5] v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 445, 446. As to similar beliefs among other Brazilian tribes, see also v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 586. v. Spix and v. Martius, *Reise in Brasilien*, i. 379.

How thoroughly the Indian mind is possessed by the belief in metempsychosis, is especially clear from the account that Dr. Koch-Grünberg gives of the religious ideas of the natives in north-west Brazil. Thus, the animals conjured in the mask-dances are evidently nothing but departed human souls, which are supposed to have taken their new abode in mountains, rocks, cataracts, etc., but especially in certain animals, quadrupeds of different kinds, as well as into birds, reptiles, fishes, and insects. How richly peopled the spiritual world of these Indians is, may be inferred from the fact that, among the Kobéua, Dr. Koch-Grünberg obtained over fifty masks representing different animal demons. Among these demons there were the jaguar, the red deer, the sloth; different kinds of birds—the parrot, the vulture, the swallow, etc.; fishes, the poisonous snake *yararáca*, frogs and tortoises, dragon-flies, butterflies, blackbeetles, spiders, worms, etc.[1] Thus there is hardly an animal being, however insignificant, which may not serve as the temporary abode of a human soul. Not only the mask-dances, but the whole ornamental art of these Indians, affords evidence of their belief in metempsychosis. Most of the ornaments painted or engraved on dancing-staffs, vessels, canoes, walls of houses, etc., are animal figures, and these figures, according to Indian magic, afford a protection against the demons incarnated in the very animals they represent. This explanation, as we have seen in a previous chapter, holds true, for instance, of the figures representing giant snakes, which Dr. Koch-Grünberg found painted upon the door-posts of the Indian Malocas on the Caiarý-Uaupés.[2] The belief that the dead assume the form of snakes is common among the Indians in all parts of tropical South America, as is directly or indirectly shown by many facts.

Dr. Koch-Grünberg adds some other statements which illustrate the doctrine of reincarnation among the tribes of the Rio Negro. Thus, from a myth of the Kobéua it appears that they once shared the Bororó idea that their dead tribesmen were changed into macaws after death.[3] The belief that the souls of living or dead persons temporarily or permanently take up their abode in birds is common in South America, and particularly natural in regard to the parrot which, through its power of speech, is more "human" than other birds.[1] Among the Siusi, moreover, the owl, the dismal cry of which was heard in the night shortly after a death, was supposed to be the ghost of the dead who haunted the place.[2] A white moth, flying over the opened grave, was attentively watched and followed by one of the sorcerers.[3] This superstitious attention was no doubt due to the presumption that the soul of the dead might possibly have assumed the shape of that insect.

---

[1] Koch-Grünberg, *Zwei Jahre unter den Indianern*, i. 176.

[2] See *supra*, p. 235.

[3] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, ii. 164 *sq.*

In the following instances we can trace the influence of the same primitive doctrine upon the social organization of the Indians. Among the Juris on the Yapurá there are various families or subordinate tribes which take their names from animals, plants, and other natural objects. Thus, one clan is named after the toucan, another after another species of large bird, another after a species of palm, another after the sun, and another after the wind.[4] Similarly, the Uainumá, on the same river, are divided into families or clans, which take their names from animals or plants. Two of them are called after two different kinds of palm, another after the bird *jacami* (the trumpeter bird, *Psophia crepitans*), another after the ounce, etc.[5] There is little doubt that these statements refer to a belief in the transmigration of human souls into animals, plants, and inanimate objects among these Indians. They also show us the beginnings of a totemic social system in so far as a whole group of people are supposed to stand in a special relationship to a certain animal or plant from which it takes its name.

The Piaroas, one of the Indian tribes on the Orinoco, we are told, admit the doctrine of metempsychosis. Thus "the tapir is their grandfather." The soul of the dying man passes into the body of the beast. Hence they will never hunt the animal nor eat of its flesh, any more than that of the jaguar, of which they stand in great fear. Though a tapir should pass and repass through their fields and ravage their crop, they will not even attempt to turn it aside or frighten it; they will rather abandon the place and go and settle elsewhere. . . . Certain spirits animate the plants and direct the beasts. At the time of the migrations of the peccaries and of certain fish, the Indians don their ornaments of feathers, teeth, and fish-bones, and assemble for a nocturnal liturgy, in which they enchant the game they are about to hunt or the fish they are about to catch. On the eve of the day fixed for the expedition, at sunset, the comrades assemble round the hut of the most expert huntsman. The chief thunders out a chant in honour of the animal, the object of their desire, recites its history, and extols its virtues. The principal object of these litanies is the peccary, a small boar which is gregarious; the *palometa*, and the *morocoto*, two delicious and delicate fishes, which are dried and preserved; and the *caribe*, another fish, which they fry and make into a nutritious powder.[1] This account is of special interest because the " nocturnal liturgy," with which the game and the fish are enchanted, is essentially of the same kind as the magical ceremonies with which some totemic peoples in North America try to influence certain animals valued as food. In all these cases, the animal or plant spirit, which is the object of the conjuration, seems to be a human soul embodied in the animal or plant.

---

[1] See also Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, ii. 165, note.

[2] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 166.

[3] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 165.

[4] v. Spix and v. Martius, *Reise in Brasilien*, iii. 1236.

[5] v. Spix and v. Martius, *op. cit.*, iii. 1208.

The Goajiros in Colombia and the Arawaks in Guiana are of those few tribes in South America who seem to have a fully developed totemic system, being divided into a great number of exogamous clans which take their names from animals and plants. According to Mr. Simons, the totem clans of the Goajiros all draw their names from animals, such as the tiger, the rabbit, the vulture, the peccary, the hawk, the dog, the stork, the rattlesnake, the owl, the fox, etc.[2]—*i.e.*, from animals which play a rôle in the religion and superstition of the Indians in many parts of South America. The Swedish ethnologist Dr. G. Bolinder, who has more recently studied the Goajiros, states that they are in all divided into fourteen clans which reckon descent on the mother's side. Each clan has a mystical connection with some eponymic animal, and the larger clans are subdivided into smaller clans, each of which likewise takes its name from some animal.[3] We know somewhat more about the totem system of the Arawaks, especially through the investigations of Sir Everard F. Im Thurn. Of their numerous clans about fifty have been discovered, the names of which are drawn from animals and plants of the country. Among animal clans there are the deer, the black monkey (*Ateles beelzebub*), the redbreast bird (*Leistes americana*), " one of the commonest and most striking in the coast region of Guiana," the tortoise, the rat, the mocking-bird (also one of the most prominent in the district), the *coriaki* parrot, the bee, the armadillo, the hawk, the razor-grinder, " an insect remarkable for the extraordinary loud sound with which it makes the forest resound," and the night-jar, or goatsucker, a bird of which there are many species in Guiana, all of which are " more or less remarkable for the extraordinary cries with which they make night hideous."[1]

---

[1] Chaffanjon, *L'Orénoque et le Caura*, p. 203 *sqq*.

[2] Simons, "An Exploration of the Goajiro Peninsula," in *Proceedings of the Roy. Geogr. Soc.*, New Series, vii., p. 789 *sq*.

[3] Bolinder, *Indianer och tre vita*, p. 70. Up to date, Dr. Bolinder has not published any further details about the totem clans of the Goajiros.

As to the origin of the names of the clans Sir Everard Im Thurn could only establish that the Arawaks—or at any rate some of them—believed that each family was descended from its eponymic animal, bird, or plant, and that most of these eponymous objects were such as are in some way prominent in Indian life.[2] The statement that each family or clan was supposed to be " descended " from the animal or plant after which it was named certainly implies that it was totemic in character, but, at the same time, it indicates a relationship between them and their respective eponymic animals or plants, which can only be satisfactorily explained from the theory of metempsychosis. The Arawaks no doubt believed that the spirits of their ancestors had inhabited these natural objects, and that after death they would themselves be changed into the same objects. It is easy to understand that such superstitious ideas are held, for instance, of an insect like the razor-grinder, or a bird like the night-jar which, through their strange cries, awaken feelings of awe in the Indians. Of some of the other animals also, from which the Arawak clans took their names—for instance, the deer, the monkey, the parrot, and the armadillo—we know that, among many South American tribes, the spirits of the dead are believed to reincarnate themselves in them. From this we cannot, of course, infer with certainty that the totemism of the Arawaks as a whole was based on the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, but this may be adduced as a probable hypothesis.

The Indians in the ancient mission of Maynas, according to the statements of the Jesuit missionaries, also believed in the reincarnation of the dead in animals. " Some nations say that the souls enter into the bodies of men, birds, tigers, and other animals; and when they fancy that the soul of their father or chief transmigrated into

---

[1] Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p. 176 *sqq.*

[2] Im Thurn, *op. cit.*, p. 184 *sq.*

into the body of any animal he pleases, a jaguar, a serpent, a sting-ray, a bird, an insect, or anything else. It is not to be wondered at that an Indian, when attacked by a beast of prey, should regard it as a *kenaima*. But it is more remarkable that he regards certain small harmless birds in the same light. One small bird which, in the early morning and in the evening, flits, with a peculiar and shrill whistle, over the savannahs, and sometimes approaches the Indian settlements, is looked upon with special distrust. When one of these is shot, the Indians suppose that they have an enemy less, and they burn it, taking great care that not even a single feather escapes to be blown about by the wind. Again, *kenaimas* in the form of worms, insects, or even inanimate objects, are supposed to enter into the bodies of their enemies, and there cause all headaches, toothaches, and other such bodily pains."[1] These beliefs of the Guiana Indians, as we find, agree in substance with those prevailing in Ecuador.

If, from the long array of facts adduced in the previous pages, we are entitled to draw any general conclusions with regard to the Indian animal spirits, these may be summarized as follows:

According to Indian theory all animals—quadrupeds, birds, reptiles, fishes, insects—possess a spirit or soul, which in essence is of the same kind as that animating man, and which survives the destruction of the body. All animals have once been men, or all men animals. This seems to be a tenet explicitly or implicitly held by all tribes. Hence the primitive view which the Indians share with most other uncivilized peoples, and which intellectually and morally places the animals on a footing of equality with man. In the practical religion or superstition of the Indians, however, only such animals play a part which, for special reasons—above all, on account of the harm that they do to man—have particularly attracted their attention. Such animals are either, in general, looked upon as the permanent or temporary reincarnations of certain human souls; or they are believed incidentally to carry the magical arrow of the sorcerers, and thus to serve as their agents in working evil. Since the magical "arrow" is regarded as a vehicle for the sorcerer's own soul, it follows that there is no essential difference between these two sets of ideas.

In regard to the first thesis, which rejects the assumption of a special "animal soul," I may once more quote that acute student of Indian customs and ideas, Sir Everard F. Im Thurn, whose view on this, as on many other points, agrees essentially with my own. "It is not, therefore," he says, "too much to say that, according to the view of the Indians, other animals differ from men only in bodily form and in their various degrees of strength. And they differ in spirit not at all; for just as the Indian sees in the separation which takes place at death or in dreams proofs of the existence of a spirit in man, so in this same death-analysis of body and spirit—all other qualities being in his view much the same in men and other animals—he sees proof of the existence in every animal of a spirit similar to that of man."[1]

---

[1] Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p. 332 *sqq.* Cp. Roth, *op. cit.*, p. 346.

Again, as to the Indian theory of the transmigration of souls, Mr. Whiffen is certainly right in pointing out that "the Indians believe in the temporary transmission of the disembodied soul into the form of an animal, bird, or reptile, not a regular and enforced series of such transmissions. This temporary transmission is for the pursuance of a certain aim, perhaps for some indefinite length of time. Whether the animal is human, whether, when invaded, it incorporates two spirits and becomes dual-souled, the Indian does not relate."[2] In fact, vainly should we look for an answer to the question how in such cases the two souls, the animal's "own" soul and the invading "human" soul, are related one to the other. Savages are not wont to work out their ideas in a logical way, and a problem which only has a theoretical interest would hardly present itself to their mind. Equally little can we hope to find an exact answer to the question how, for instance, a sorcerer is able temporarily to transmit his soul into a jaguar or a snake, and again receive it in his own body, after the beast or the reptile has executed its nefarious commission. Is it, perchance, only a part of his own soul that the sorcerer sends off, or is he endowed with two different souls, one properly "human," another particularly suited to the nature of the animal into which he is able to transform himself? I only know one instance of a dualistic conception of the human soul in South America, namely, in reference to the Apapocuva-Guaranis in southern Brazil. These Indians believe that every man has two kinds of soul: the one, called *ayvucué*, is the specific *human* soul; but soon after birth a new element associates itself with this soul, after death, transmigrate into the owl, the dismal nightly cry of which is therefore regarded as the voice of the spirits. Of the goatsucker, another nocturnal bird, whose mournful tones fill the Indians with superstitious awe, the Jibaros have the belief that it was anciently a Jibaro woman, the wife of the Moon, who was abandoned by her husband, and who still, at every new moon, laments her sad fate. The Canelos and the Napo Indians believe that the goatsucker is a spirit that portends death. But the idea most commonly held about birds is that they may temporarily serve as the agents of malignant sorcerers who are carrying out their evil designs against other people. Such birds are said to be *tunchima* or " bewitched." This expression implies that a sorcerer is supposed to have hidden his own soul or his death-bringing magical arrow in the bird, which will thereafter carry it away and let it off against the person whom the sorcerer wants to kill or harm. In regard to the birds of which this belief is held, it is to be noted that all of them are distinguished by some peculiarity in their appearance, their habits of life, or their sounds. *All* individuals of a species are not necessarily *iguanchi* or demons, but they may occasionally appear as such. Thus, the largest birds of prey in South America—the condor, the great eagle or harpy, the hawk, and the owl—are often looked upon as evil demons, especially if they attack men or domestic animals, or else appear under unusual circumstances. Other demoniacal birds—*i.e.*, birds that may carry the arrow of sorcerers and thus inflict disease—are, for instance, the black vulture, the toucan, the great macaw, the ordinary green parrot, and nearly all nocturnal birds, especially such as awake superstitious fear in the Indians by their strange cries. Among the latter there is one called *cuicui*, a small bird which moves about at night producing a whistling sound by means of which it is supposed to bewitch people; and another small bird called *uichuchu*, with a long tail and of colour almost green, which leaves its resting-place upon the rocks at night and approaches the habitations of men, producing the cry from which it takes its name. The Indians say that the *uichuchu*, when sent by a sorcerer, carries the magical arrow far away to other places, bringing disease and death to the people there. The small nocturnal bird is therefore greatly feared, and is often—together with other demoniacal birds—mentioned in the conjurations of the medicine-men.[1]

---

[1] Im Thurn, *op. cit.*, p. 352. Cp. also Koch-Grünberg, *Vom Roroima zum Orinoco*, Bd. II., *Mythen und Legenden der Taulipang- und Arekuna-Indianer*, p. 15 *sqq*. Roth, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

[2] Whiffen, *op. cit.*, p. 225.

---

[1] See Karsten, *Religion of the Jibaro Indians* (*Boletin de la Academia Nacional de Historia*, Quito, Ecuador, vol. iii., No. 6, 1922), p. 7.

The Canelos Indians likewise regard certain birds as the agents of evil-working sorcerers. Such a bird is, for instance, the toucan (*Rhamphastus*), remarkable for its enormously large beak, with which, according to Indian belief, it may bewitch people. When a Jibaro or Canelos man has to observe fasting on account of the birth of a son, he, among other obligations, must abstain from eating the toucan, believing that otherwise his newborn son will be bewitched. Another similar bird is the great macaw, which also may carry the arrow of a sorcerer and therefore, together with the toucan, is summoned by the medicine-men when they have to cure disease caused by witchcraft. Other birds, especially the nocturnal ones, are regarded as demoniacal because of the whistling sound they produce. Such a bird is the *supai pischu* ("the devil's bird"), a small nocturnal bird living near the lagoons. When it moves around the houses at night whistling, the Indians are inspired with superstitious fear: they believe that the ominous bird, who is certainly sent by a sorcerer, will visit them with sickness and death. The Canelos Indians, when they hear the cry of the *supai pishcu*, are therefore in the habit of shooting into the air in order to frighten it away.[1]

Similar beliefs are held by all tribes in Ecuador, and there is little doubt that we have here a set of ideas in regard to birds which, with small variations, prevails among all Indians in tropical South America.

The superstitions prevailing in regard to reptiles, especially venomous snakes, are also of particular interest. The first to be mentioned within this category of spirits is that great water monster, haunting the Amazonian rivers and lagoons, the anaconda or water boa (*Eunectes murinus*). The Jibaros call it *pangi*, the Quichua-speaking Indians *amárun*. The anaconda, in fact, is the principal and the most feared of all the demons that people the spiritual world of the Ecuadorian Indians. He is the father of witchcraft. It is from his body that the medicine-men get the poison with which their organism is impregnated, and the magic arrow which they send against their enemies. Both after death and in their lifetime the souls of the medicine-men are supposed to be able to transmigrate into the anaconda; and when the Indians kill such a monster they say that they have killed an evil sorcerer. The largest specimens of the anaconda the Indians do not even touch with their hands after having killed them—for fear of the evil influences arising from coming in contact with the demon—but the skin of the smaller boas is often prepared into broad cinctures, to which great magical power is ascribed. Other parts of this magical beast are also supposed to possess a wonderful power. Thus the Jibaros, when they have killed an anaconda, are in the habit of taking out the eyes, which are dried in the sun, and thereafter pounded into powder and mixed with *achiote* (*Bixa orellana*). The Jibaro men, when they want to attract a woman, paint themselves in the face with this dye, the painting being supposed to exert an irresistible influence upon the female sex. The Canelos and the Napo Indians never touch a dead boa with their hands, lest their body should become scaly like that of the serpent. If they shoot it with a gun, the barrel, according to their idea, will burst, or some other accident occur. If they shoot it with a poisoned arrow, the whole supply of arrow-poison will thereafter entirely lose its efficacy. These Indians fancy that the *amárun supai* (the anaconda demon) especially haunts the cataracts and other dangerous places in the rivers, where accidents easily occur to travellers by canoe. A boa serpent, encountered in the neighbourhood of a house, is regarded as an evil sorcerer who has taken this shape to carry out his evil designs against its inhabitants.[1]

---

[1] Karsten, *Religion of the Jibaro Indians* (*op. cit.*), pp. 16 *sq.*

These are probably the general ideas prevailing about the boa in the whole Amazonian territory. Thus Captain Whiffen states, with reference to the Indians of north-west Brazil: "Any animal may be utilized by a spirit as a temporary abiding-place, but the 'tiger' and the great water snake, independently of such spiritual possession, are magical beasts. The anaconda is looked upon as an evil spirit. It is the embodiment of the water spirit, the *yacu mama*, spirit of the streams."[2] Just as the medicine-men among these Indians make use of tiger skins for magical purposes, so they may use anaconda skins to the same end. Thus Mr. Whiffen relates that once he saw a medicine-man with the skin of an anaconda, and was told that by using the skin he could control the spirit of the anaconda. Mr. Whiffen adds that for the same purpose the medicine-men are habitually provided with the dried skins of lizards and snakes.[3]

Such facts in a manner confirm the hypothesis I advanced in a previous chapter, that the frequent use of ornaments representing anacondas and other snakes, in the art of the Brazilian Indians, is intimately connected with prevailing beliefs that snakes are incarnations of evil demons. We may also regard it as certain that the snake-dance, mentioned by Mr. Wallace from among the Uaupés Indians, had its origin in similar ideas. The Avas or Chiriguanos in Bolivia also offer an interesting instance of a superstitious use of snake ornaments in primitive art. In their country figures of snakes are—among other animal patterns—found engraved upon the rocks or on the walls of certain caves, and there is little doubt that these figures represent the demons (*añas*), who, in Indian belief, haunt mysterious caves.[1] In the religion and mythology of these Indians not only quadrupeds, but also snakes, hold an important place. Thus, one of their myths tells us about a boa-constrictor which lived on a mountain and swallowed some Indians. All these Indians were changed into giant snakes. Hence the Avas never kill a boa-constrictor.[2] The Avas thus appear to have the same belief as the Itonama Indians, who regard the boa-constrictor as a *chokihua*, *i.e.*, as the reincarnation of a dead Itonama.[3]

---

[1] Karsten, *Religion of the Jibaro Indians* (*op. cit.*), p. 5 *sq.*, 15 *sq.*

[2] Whiffen, *op. cit.*, p. 231.

[3] Whiffen, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

The Caribs and Arawaks of Guiana have an interesting superstition about the boa serpent, which not only illustrates the prevailing ideas about snake spirits, but also plainly shows how intimately connected is the magic of the Indians with their animistic beliefs. These Indians make use of certain charms to gain success in hunting, in love, etc., which are called *toelala* in the Carib language, and *biena* in Arawak. The belief is current that all *toelala* are derived from the spirit of the serpent, because the serpent, on account of its fascinating look and its other mysterious qualities, is regarded as a powerful source of witchcraft. In order to obtain these charms, a big snake, if possible an *aboma* (boa-constrictor), is killed. As soon as all signs of life have disappeared, the carcase is buried under the ground, the burial-place having first been carefully cleaned and singed bare. In the course of a few days tubers of certain plants will sprout in great numbers from the ground along the length and breadth of the rotting carcase. The most common of these plants is the scarlet spotted *Caladium bicolor*. The flower grows on a long stalk, and from the upper bulky part a small white leaf protrudes, which encircles a brownish protuberance, about six centimetres in length and remarkably like a snake. The *toelala* is now prepared from the tubers of these plants by pounding or mashing them, and mixing them with the seeds of the roucou (*Bixa orellana*). The red substance thus obtained is used for painting the body, the regions round the eyes, the ears, the lips, the legs, and so forth, being smeared with it.

---

[1] Nordenskiöld, *Forskningar och äventyr i Sydamerika*, pp. 29, 36. See *supra*, p. 262.

[2] Nordenskiöld, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

[3] Nordenskiöld, *op. cit.*, p. 312.

The word *toelala* means "spirit seed" (*Geistzaad*), and the supernatural effects of this charm or fetish, according to Indian belief, proceed directly from the body of the serpent. In the latter there resides "a bewitching spirit, which twists round another spirit and holds it, just as the living snake keeps its victim spellbound through fear, attracts it and seizes it."[1]

This is the explanation as to the nature and significance of the *toelala*, which our authorities, Messrs. F. P. and A. P. Penard, directly received from the natives themselves. The similarity between the ideas current about the boa serpent in Guiana and in the Amazon territory, especially among the Ecuadorian Indians, is obvious. Here, as well as there, this monster serpent is regarded as a "magical" beast, and the supernatural effects ascribed to parts of its body, or to plants growing upon the spot where it has been buried, are due to the *spirit* residing in the reptile. There is spiritual and magical power in its skin and in its fascinating eyes, from which the Jibaros prepare their love charm by pounding them and mixing them with roucou, or in the plants which, through their strange snake-like protuberance, strike the imagination of the natives. As to the nature of this snake spirit the Ecuadorian Indians have no doubt: it is the soul of a sorcerer—a living or a dead one—temporarily or permanently incarnated in the monster. In the case of the Arawaks and Caribs there is nothing expressly stated about its character; but there is hardly anything contradictory to the assumption that these Indians have the same idea, an idea which in fact seems to be commonly held of the smaller and venomous snakes also, in those parts of South America where such reptiles abound.

Among all Ecuadorian tribes with whom I have become acquainted venomous snakes are regarded as evil spirits and therefore greatly feared. The general idea prevailing is that, with the bite of the venomous snake, an evil spirit enters into the body.

---

[1] Penard, *De menschetende Aanbidders der Zonneslang*, i. 177-181. Cp. Roth, *Animism and Folklore of the Guiana Indians*, p. 283 *sq.* There are also animal *bienas* (or *binas*) for attracting game, which have a different origin (see Roth, *op. cit.*, p. 284). I myself have found similar hunting charms among the Ecuadorian Indians.

But generally the Indians go still further in their theory. Thus the Jibaros are, in each particular case, convinced that the *wakani* or *iguanchi* which entered into the person stung, and caused the death, was in fact nothing but the devil-soul of a sorcerer, who had taken the shape of the reptile in order to kill his enemy. The Indians make a distinction between "natural" and "supernatural" or demoniacal snakes, the latter being snakes in which the soul of a sorcerer has temporarily taken up its abode. The Jibaros call such a snake *tunchima, i.e.*, "bewitched." If a non-venomous snake stings, or if the bite of a venomous snake did not do the person stung any particular harm, this was only a "natural" snake-bite. If, on the other hand, the person became dangerously ill or died in consequence of it, the snake was *tunchima.* Persons stung by bewitched snakes, therefore, generally die, or can only be cured by the magic art of other sorcerers.

Few phenomena of the animal world have impressed the primitive Indian mind so strongly as the venomous snakes. Through their peculiar appearance, their soundless movements, and especially through their mysterious death-bringing bite, they are, in fact, most likely to give rise to superstitious beliefs. Thus, the venomous snakes seem to have suggested to the Indian sorcerers the ideas upon which their magic art is based. Moreover, the Indian arrow-poison is probably in its origin nothing but an imitation of the snake's poison, the same superstitious ideas being connected with the one as with the other.[1]

Exactly the same beliefs prevail among the Quichua-speaking Canelos Indians on the Rio Bobonaza, and the Napo Indians. Any venomous snake is believed occasionally—that is to say, when it attacks or does harm to man or to domestic animals—to appear as a *supai*, or as the agent of an evil sorcerer. Among these demons there are, for instance, the rattlesnake (*mutúlu supai*) and the *ekis* (*Lachesis*, called *pitalála*), the most dangerous snakes in the Ecuadorian forests. With a common name such snakes are also called *supai huasca* ("the devil's vine"), *huasca* being the Quichua word for vine or liana. Again, the Colorado Indians in western Ecuador call venomous snakes *jukáng*, which is their word for demon, and of a person stung by a venomous snake they say that he is *jukáng keáhoe* ("possessed by an evil spirit"). The demon which enters into the body of the person stung is generally thought to be the soul of an evil-working wizard.

---

[1] See Karsten, *Beiträge zur Sittengeschichte der südamerikanischen Indianer* (*op. cit.*), p. 24 *sqq.*

Similar ideas in regard to snakes no doubt prevail in other parts of tropical South America also, and if there are so few instances to be gathered on this point, this is probably only due to our defective knowledge of the religious ideas of the South American Indians in general. Thus, of the Betoyes Indians on the Orinoco, Father Juan Rivero relates that when an Indian wants to kill another Indian, he sends a venomous snake to sting him, the snake or its poison being regarded as an evil demon. In order to protect themselves against the attacks of such snakes, the natives are in the habit of painting various figures of snakes upon their legs, believing that thus they may frighten away the real snakes.[1] There is a similar statement by Sir Everard F. Im Thurn in regard to the Indians of Guiana, which will presently be quoted. Not only venomous snakes, but also other animal beings among these Indians figure as the agents of the evil *kenaimas* (sorcerers).[2]

That the Indian spirits and demons may even take the shape of such animal beings as fishes and insects has appeared from previous statements. Thus, among the Bororó, according to Professor von den Steinen, the souls of dead *baris* or medicine-men are believed to reincarnate themselves in certain large fishes, particularly appreciated as food. Another *bari* must " bless " the fish before it can be eaten.[3] A similar belief is probably held by many tribes in South America. Thus, the Toba women in Chaco abstain from eating fish for a certain time after the death of a parent, fearing lest the soul of the deceased should hide in the stomach of the fish. As to insects, the following belief, prevailing among the Araucanians, may be regarded as typical. These Indians, we are told, have a curious superstition about horse-flies, which are looked upon as spirits from the shade-land. If some horse-flies enter a village while somebody is ill, the Indians begin to wail as if he were already dead, saying that the horse-flies are the souls of their dead relatives who are coming to fetch him away. When at their great drinking-bouts these insects appear, they say that the horse-flies are the souls of their dead kinsmen who are coming to take part in the feast in order to divert themselves. They believe that their chiefs especially transform themselves into horse-flies and remain in this shape in the graves, from which they sometimes emerge to see their relatives.[1]

---

[1] Rivero, *Historia de las misiones de los llanos de Casanare y los Rios Orinoco y Meta*, p. 348.

[2] Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p. 332.

[3] See *supra*, p. 218.

The Araucanian superstition about horse-flies may be compared with the idea of the Itonamas in Bolivia, that a certain beautiful black day-butterfly, called *lápo-lapo*, is a *chokihua*, *i.e.*, the soul of a dead Itonama.[2] I may also recall the mask-dances of the Indians of north-west Brazil, in which not only different quadrupeds, and birds, etc., were imitated, but also animal beings of a lower order, such as dragon-flies, butterflies, blackbeetles, spiders, and worms. As pointed out before, the mask-dances of the Kobéua are founded on the idea of metempsychosis. And just as we can thus establish the fact that the ordinary theory of the transmigration of souls refers also to insects, we may further state that poisonous insects play the same part in Indian witchcraft as certain quadrupeds, birds, and reptiles. The sorcerers not seldom use them as their agents to carry out their evil designs against other people. This is a common thing in the practice of the Ecuadorian wizards. Thus, among the Jibaros and the Canelos Indians, certain venomous insects are regarded as demons. The Indians of Canelos pay particular attention to the black wasp, the scorpion, called *uputíndi supai*, and the great black ant *tucandera*, called *yutúri supai*, the poisonous stings of which are supposed to resemble the magical arrow of the sorcerers. When a sorcerer wants to bewitch another Indian, he generally tries to secure a black wasp, fixes three small *chonta* thorns to its abdomen, and shoots it off with a formula of conjuration against his victim. The Jibaros also, in their magic art, make use of insects possessing natural "arrows." Among them there is a big hairy worm, called *wambángu*, which, when caught with the fingers, is able to inflict a stinging pain. The worm *wambángu*, therefore, is sometimes invoked by the medicine-men when curing sickness caused by witchcraft.

These ideas about animal demons serving as the particular agents of evil-working sorcerers are certainly not limited to the Ecuadorian Indians. It is enough to quote the following statement by Sir Everard F. Im Thurn, relating to the *kenaimas*, or wizards of the Indians of Guiana: "Nor is it only in his own proper body, or as an invisible spirit, that the *kenaima* is supposed to be able to approach his unsuspecting victim. He has the power of putting his spirit into the body of any animal he pleases, a jaguar, a serpent, a sting-ray, a bird, an insect, or anything else. It is not to be wondered at that an Indian, when attacked by a beast of prey, should regard it as a *kenaima*. But it is more remarkable that he regards certain small harmless birds in the same light. One small bird which, in the early morning and in the evening, flits, with a peculiar and shrill whistle, over the savannahs, and sometimes approaches the Indian settlements, is looked upon with special distrust. When one of these is shot, the Indians suppose that they have an enemy less, and they burn it, taking great care that not even a single feather escapes to be blown about by the wind. Again, *kenaimas* in the form of worms, insects, or even inanimate objects, are supposed to enter into the bodies of their enemies, and there cause all headaches, toothaches, and other such bodily pains."[1] These beliefs of the Guiana Indians, as we find, agree in substance with those prevailing in Ecuador.

---

[1] Medina, *Los aborigenes de Chile*, pp. 235, 238. A similar idea, according to Dr. Nordenskiöld, prevails among the Quichuas of Bolivia (Nordenskiöld, *op. cit.*, p. 144).

[2] Nordenskiöld, *op. cit.*, p. 312.

If, from the long array of facts adduced in the previous pages, we are entitled to draw any general conclusions with regard to the Indian animal spirits, these may be summarized as follows:

According to Indian theory all animals—quadrupeds, birds, reptiles, fishes, insects—possess a spirit or soul, which in essence is of the same kind as that animating man, and which survives the destruction of the body. All animals have once been men, or all men animals. This seems to be a tenet explicitly or implicitly held by all tribes. Hence the primitive view which the Indians share with most other uncivilized peoples, and which intellectually and morally places the animals on a footing of equality with man. In the practical religion or superstition of the Indians, however, only such animals play a part which, for special reasons—above all, on account of the harm that they do to man—have particularly attracted their attention. Such animals are either, in general, looked upon as the permanent or temporary reincarnations of certain human souls; or they are believed incidentally to carry the magical arrow of the sorcerers, and thus to serve as their agents in working evil. Since the magical "arrow" is regarded as a vehicle for the sorcerer's own soul, it follows that there is no essential difference between these two sets of ideas.

In regard to the first thesis, which rejects the assumption of a special "animal soul," I may once more quote that acute student of Indian customs and ideas, Sir Everard F. Im Thurn, whose view on this, as on many other points, agrees essentially with my own. "It is not, therefore," he says, "too much to say that, according to the view of the Indians, other animals differ from men only in bodily form and in their various degrees of strength. And they differ in spirit not at all; for just as the Indian sees in the separation which takes place at death or in dreams proofs of the existence of a spirit in man, so in this same death-analysis of body and spirit—all other qualities being in his view much the same in men and other animals—he sees proof of the existence in every animal of a spirit similar to that of man."[1]

---

[1] Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p. 332 *sqq*. Cp. Roth, *op. cit.*, p. 346.

Again, as to the Indian theory of the transmigration of souls, Mr. Whiffen is certainly right in pointing out that "the Indians believe in the temporary transmission of the disembodied soul into the form of an animal, bird, or reptile, not a regular and enforced series of such transmissions. This temporary transmission is for the pursuance of a certain aim, perhaps for some indefinite length of time. Whether the animal is human, whether, when invaded, it incorporates two spirits and becomes dual-souled, the Indian does not relate."[2] In fact, vainly should we look for an answer to the question how in such cases the two souls, the animal's "own" soul and the invading "human" soul, are related one to the other. Savages are not wont to work out their ideas in a logical way, and a problem which only has a theoretical interest would hardly present itself to their mind. Equally little can we hope to find an exact answer to the question how, for instance, a sorcerer is able temporarily to transmit his soul into a jaguar or a snake, and again receive it in his own body, after the beast or the reptile has executed its nefarious commission. Is it, perchance, only a part of his own soul that the sorcerer sends off, or is he endowed with two different souls, one properly "human," another particularly suited to the nature of the animal into which he is able to transform himself? I only know one instance of a dualistic conception of the human soul in South America, namely, in reference to the Apapocuva-Guaranis in southern Brazil. These Indians believe that every man has two kinds of soul: the one, called *ayvucué*, is the specific *human* soul; but soon after birth a new element associates itself with this soul, namely, that which the Apapocuvas call *acyiguá*, and which is particularly an animal soul. The *ayvucué* is much the same with all men; what makes differences in character among men is the animal soul, the *acyiguá*. Every man has the kind of animal soul which corresponds to his own nature. The worst men have the soul of some beast of prey, and then the animal *acyiguá* entirely predominates over the *ayvucué*, the soul which inspires the tender human emotions. The more ill-natured a person is, the more ferocious is the animal whose soul is associated with his *ayvucué*. Therefore, according to the idea of the Apapocuvas, the hostile and warlike Kaingýgn possess exclusively the souls of tigers and wild-cats; they are in reality tigers in human shape.[1] Our informant, the German ethnologist Unkel—himself an adopted member of the tribe of the Apapocuva-Guaranis—adds that this dualistic notion of the soul throws an interesting light upon the common Indian belief in werewolves, or the transformation of men into animals. The person in question need not first find out an animal into which his soul can pass, and he need not "transform" himself, as he was even before that very animal in essence, although in human form. Death only had separated the two souls, and then the *acyiguá* appeared in its true animal shape; but at the rebirth of the person the *acyiguá* again entered into relation with his *ayvucué*.

---

[1] Im Thurn, *op. cit.*, p. 352. Cp. also Koch-Grünberg, *Vom Roroima zum Orinoco*, Bd. II., *Mythen und Legenden der Taulipang- und Arekuna-Indianer*, p. 15 *sqq*. Roth, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

[2] Whiffen, *op. cit.*, p. 225.

It is, however, evident that this dualistic conception of the human soul is not a general idea in South America. On the contrary, it is probably exceptional among the Apapocuva-Guaranis, being here perhaps only a later development of the common Indian belief in the reincarnation of the dead in animals. But the particular idea that the souls of certain persons, or of whole groups of men, transmigrate into a kind of animal, the nature of which bears some similarity to their own, is familiar to many tribes, and is especially characteristic of totemic peoples. The association of a man with a certain animal is not accidental, but founded on some supposed physical or spiritual affinity between them. As a curious instance of this view the Afaié-Chavantes may be mentioned. These Indians, who are in the habit of perforating the lobes of their ears, regarded an armadillo as their kinsman because it had a hole in the ear like themselves, and they did not kill it.[2] The Toba men, as we have seen, are believed to be changed into ostriches after death, on account of their running speed. Malicious sorcerers are among many tribes supposed to become tigers or snakes; and the weak and timid women are in the same way commonly associated with the deer, and so forth. But about the particular way in which the soul "transmigrates" from one body to another, and the changes that take place in the body it leaves and the one into which it enters, the Indians seem not to have formed a clear idea. Only an examination of the Indian theory of generation and conception can, perhaps, reveal something of the peculiar ways of thinking which seem to underlie the animistic philosophy of the Indians on this point.

---

[1] Nimuendajú-Unkel, *Religion der Apapocuva-Guarani* (*Zeitschrift f. Ethnologie*, 1913, Heft II. und III.), pp. 302, 305, 370-372.

[2] Nimuendajú-Unkel, *op. cit.*, p. 371.

All religious or superstitious practices in which animals play a part, as far as we can judge, are founded on the belief in spirits animating the animals. Of animal worship independent of animism there are no traces.

As to totemism, it is well established only in regard to a few tribes, such as the Arawaks in Guiana, the Goajiros in Colombia, and the Araucanians in Chile; but traces of a totemic belief and clan-organization, as we have seen, are encountered among several other tribes. How totemism may be thought to have originated is, it seems to me, indicated, for instance, in the case of the Bororó, who "identify themselves with macaws," and believe that both men and women after death transmigrate into this bird. The natural consequence is that the bird is held sacred much in the same sense as totemic animals generally are, its flesh being never eaten. A similar belief in regard to the macaw seems to be held by the Kobéua, and in regard to the bird *sacy* by the Gayatacazes. A real totemic system does not, however, exist among any of these tribes. But when we hear that the Juris are divided into a number of subordinate tribes or clans, of which one takes its name from the toucan, another from another species of large bird, etc., it is an easy conjecture that this clan-organization has its foundation in a belief like that of the Bororó, namely, that the members of each clan will be changed into the very bird or animal after which it is named. In the same way I would explain the fact that, for instance, among the Uainumá in Brazil and the Arawaks in Guiana, some clans are named after palms or other trees or plants. Similarly, when we proceed to examine the spirits residing in inanimate objects, we shall see that certain tribes even take their names from rocks, into which the souls of their ancestors are believed to have passed, or from which the whole tribe, according to native myths, has arisen.

Although, thus, there are clear instances of totemism in the religion of the South American Indians it must, on the other hand, be observed that, in South America, as in other parts of the world, the term " totemism " has been much abused by ethnological writers. Not only the ethnological school represented by Father W. Schmidt has assumed the existence of a whole " totem culture " as a stage through which the Indians, like other lower peoples, have passed, and of which survivals are still to be found. Such a theory has never been proved and, of course, cannot be proved. Thus totemism in the New World has never been a general phenomenon, but has been limited to certain tribes or groups of people. Moreover, wherever superstitious ideas and practices of some kind in regard to animals have been found in South America, certain travellers have been ready to regard them as " traces " of totemism, even when the superstition has only appeared, for instance, in a reluctance to eat the flesh of the animal in question. From our previous investigations it has appeared that there is a whole class of animals, birds, reptiles, insects, etc., which are looked upon as " demoniacal," because they are regarded as the reincarnations of the souls of evil wizards, or because the latter are believed to use parts of their body as bewitching arrows. The flesh of such an animal is generally shunned as food. But this superstition, of course, has nothing to do with totemism.

As to my theory that totemism has originated in the primitive doctrine of the transmigration of souls, I may remark that the said doctrine does not by itself explain why certain tribes derive their descent from the particular animals, or plants, or inanimate objects which they regard as their totems, and which they revere as their ancestors. This belief, in order to be fully intelligible, should be viewed in the light thrown upon it by the Indian theory of generation and conception, to which I shall devote some attention in a later chapter.

We may now pass to examine the nature of the Indian plant spirits in South America.

CHAPTER X

INDIAN CONCEPTION OF PLANT SPIRITS

WHEREAS superstitious ideas about animals are mentioned from different parts of South America, there are comparatively few direct traces to be found of what may be called a plant worship among the South American Indians. The best known on this point are the ideas and customs of the ancient Peruvians, recorded by certain ecclesiastical Spanish writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, to whom in other matters also we owe our best information concerning the culture of the Inca empire at the time of the conquest. On the other hand, we know enough of the primitive Indian religion east of the Andes to show that the belief in, and worship of, an Earth-mother, a Maize-goddess, and other plant deities, was not a phenomenon exceptional to the Incas, but still exists in other parts of the South American continent. In fact, we may say at once that plant spirits play the same important rôle in the practical religion of the Indians as animal spirits, and from a certain point of view perhaps a still more important one. But unfortunately most modern ethnologists who have travelled among the Indians have been far less thorough in their studies than the early Spanish writers, and have paid but little attention to this particular aspect of their customs and beliefs. In many cases the true nature of the " sacredness " ascribed to certain trees and plants can only be found out by a careful analysis of the myths, rites, and superstitious practices with which they are connected. For my own part I shall in the present chapter, devoted to an examination of the Indian plant spirits, to a great extent base my conclusions upon facts collected by myself during my sojourn among the Indians of Gran Chaco and of Ecuador.

First of all, attention may be drawn to the fact that the idea of an Earth-mother or deity of vegetation, which has prevailed among the Aryan peoples of Europe, and is met with in several other parts of the world, was also held by the ancient Peruvians. One of their great anthropomorphic deities, as we know, was Pachamama (literally:

Mother Earth), and this belief still survives among the modern heritors of the Inca culture, the Quichuas and Aymará in Peru and Bolivia. That the earth, which constantly brings forth the crops for the sustenance of mankind, should be likened unto a woman bearing children, of course, is an idea that lies within easy reach of a primitive mind. The Peruvians looked upon the earth as their "Mother," and they went so far as to honour her as the particular tutelary deity of pregnant women, who also used to make sacrifices to her when they were about to bear children.[1] But the Peruvian women especially paid reverence to the earth at the time when they were going to sow, sprinkling the fields with *chicha* (maize-beer) and mashed maize, and addressing the Great Mother in prayers, either in their own person or through the sorcerers.[2] The intimate, so to say "physiological," connection which most Indians assume between woman and agriculture thus appears among the Quichuas and Aymará in a characteristic way.

The notion of an Earth-mother, conceived as a more or less anthropomorphic deity producing the different individual trees and plants and reigning over them all, is a comparatively abstract idea which, in this form, cannot be expected to exist among the most primitive Indians. Yet similar ideas are as a matter of fact found east of the Andes also, although they have a more animistic colouring than they had among the Incas. Of particular interest on this point is the Earth-deity of the Jibaros. Nungüi—a word derived from the same stem as the word *nunga* ("earth")—is, among these Indians, worshipped as the particular deity of the women, as was Pachamama among the Incas, and all agricultural practices centre round her person. One of the most beautiful myths of the Jibaros tells us how once, in primeval times, the goddess appeared to the Jibaro women and taught them the cultivation of the different fruits which still make their chief vegetable food. At that time the goddess herself lived amidst her people. But since her children proved ungrateful, she one day suddenly disappeared in a dense smoke in the interior of the earth. There Nungüi still lives, always taking care of her people, and carrying out the regular growth of the crops.

---

[1] Santillán, *Relacion del origen, descendencia, politica y gobierno de los Incas* (*Tres relaciones de antigüedades Peruanas*), pp. 30, 31.

[2] Arriaga, *Extirpacion de la idolatria del Perú*, c. 2, p. 11. Cp. Villagomez, *Carta pastoral de exortación e instrucción contra las idolatrías de los indios del arzobispado de Lima*, fol. 39. Garcilasso de la Vega, *Comentarios reales*, bk. I., c. 10. Bandelier, *The Islands of Titicaca and Koati*, pp. 96, 152 *sq.*

When new plantations are made, when the seeds are sown, the women never fail to invoke, in special incantations, Nungüi herself, and also her mythical husband Shakaema, who formerly did the same service to agriculture as the Jibaro men still do, namely, to clear the ground for making new plantations. When, at the " feast of the women," or on other occasions, the married Jibaro women drink the narcotic *natema*, Nungüi afterwards appears to them in a dream, and teaches them how to tend the fields in order that they shall bear well and be rich in fruit. In each of the different garden plants—those which are supposed to be of female sex—there is something of Nungüi's soul, and when the Earth-goddess is worshipped at sowing and planting, these individual plant spirits are at the same time favourably influenced.[1]

It cannot be doubted that similar ideas about an Earth-mother prevail among many other tribes in tropical South America also, although there are no direct statements to this effect. At any rate, there are notions about masculine plant demons, Great Spirits of the vegetation, or whatever we may call them, who rule the trees and plants, and are appealed to by their worshippers for a rich harvest. Generally they are at the same time honoured as ancestors of the Indian race, and as founders of its general culture. Such a " Supreme Being " is, for instance, the great ancestral spirit of the Uitóto, Naimuéna, worshipped as the creator of the world, and particularly as the father of the plants and animals. Every year he reveals himself to the Indians in the growth of the vegetation. His soul resides in the individual trees and plants, and after the harvest he goes back to the under-world. Consequently the Indians are able to say that " during the whole time there are no fruits they have gone to the Father under the earth. The soul (*koméke*) of our fruits and plantations goes to the dwelling-place of the Father. Their soul is identical with that of the Father."[2] The Uitóto thus have developed their animistic conceptions so far, that the individual plant spirits, ascribed to each single tree or plant, are made subordinate to a god of the vegetation reigning over them. Plant demons of the same kind are, for instance, the famous " Great Spirit " of the Uaupés Indians, Yurupary, and the deity of the Indians of

---

[1] See Karsten, *Contributions to the Sociology of the Indian Tribes of Ecuador* (*Acta Academiæ Aboënsis*. Humaniora, I: 3, 1920), p. 2 *sqq*. The myth is related at length in my *Mitos de los indios Jibaros* (*Boletin de la Academia Nacional de Historia*, Quito, 1919, No. 6).

[2] Preuss, *Religion und Mythologie der Uitóto*, pp. 28, 29.

Orinoco, Cachimana, whom I shall presently have reason to deal with again in connection with the corresponding mystery ceremonies of these natives.

Now we may proceed to examine, as closely as possible, the individual plant spirits, and it seems most convenient to begin with the spirits or souls ascribed to trees and shrubs. At first it is proper to point out that just as animal demons of the kind we spoke of in the previous chapter are encountered not only in South America, but in the northern continent of the New World as well, so is it with plant demons. In North America also the tree spirits generally seem to be conceived as human souls, or at any rate as spirits of the same kind as those animating the human body. In some cases there is even the idea of a direct transmigration of human souls into trees. Thus, in a report of the British Association on the north-western tribes of Canada, we are told that "trees are considered transformed men. The creaking of the limbs is their voice."[1] This belief seems to be held, for instance, of the *cedar*, which to many North American tribes is a sacred tree. So it is to the Cherokee, who regard the cedar with the same superstition as that with which they regard certain animals, although it is not one of their totems. The small green twigs are burnt as incense in certain ceremonies, especially to counteract the effect of evil dreams; for they think that the malicious demons who cause such dreams cannot endure the smell of burning cedar. But the wood itself is considered too sacred to be used as fuel. "According to a myth, the red tinge of the wood comes originally from the blood of a wicked magician, whose severed head was hung on the top of a tall cedar."[2] From this we may infer that the spirit or soul, which is believed to animate the cedar, is identical with the soul of a magician, and that the *mana* or supernatural power which is ascribed to the wood, twigs, and other parts of the tree, is derived from this soul. When a human soul, especially the soul of a medicine-man or sorcerer, is supposed to be incarnated in an animal or a plant, certain parts of that animal or plant, as we have seen, are believed to possess mysterious magical properties. It is fully in accordance with this view that, for instance, among the tribes in north-west America the insignia or magical crests of the secret societies are always made of the bark of cedar "carefully prepared and dyed red by means of maple bark. It may be said that the secrets are vested in these ornaments of red cedar bark, and wherever these ornaments are found on the north-west coast secret societies occur."[1] In the dances of the secret societies of the Kwakiutl, the paraphernalia largely consist of ornaments made of cedar bark which is dyed in the juice of alder bark, and they also include masks, whistles, and carvings of various kinds. None of these might be seen by the profane. If any uninitiated person beheld them in the old days, he or she was killed without mercy.[2] According to another authority, the ceremonial masks of the north-western tribes are carved "from spruce or yellow cedar."[3] Likewise the *rattles* are "usually made of cedar wood, elaborately carved and painted in totemic designs."[4]

---

[1] Boas, *Sixth Report of the Committee on the North-western Tribes of Canada* (*Report of the British Association*, Leeds, 1890), p. 580.

[2] Mooney, *Myths of the Cherokee* (*Nineteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, part i., 1900), p. 421.

I have quoted these statements concerning the ideas of some North American tribes, principally because of their striking similarity to certain superstitions in South America, mentioned in the course of our previous investigations. We have seen to what is due the supernatural power, which in South America is ascribed to instruments like drums, rattles, masks, flutes, and bull-roarers. Now we find that the sacred instruments of the North American Indians owe their *mana* to similar animistic ideas. They are made of a material (the bark or wood of the cedar), which is, as it were, "impregnated" with a human spirit. Moreover, just as the masks, flutes, and bull-roarers, used in the mystery ceremonies of the Brazilian Indians, are taboo to women and children, because of their contact with the death-spirit which is conjured by them, so there is little doubt that the masks and whistles of the secret societies are taboo to such uninitiated persons for the same reasons. They are infected by the dangerous spirits dealt with in the ceremonies of these secret societies.

We return to the South American Indians. Their ideas about the spirits inhabiting trees and plants, it seems to me, nowhere appear in a more typical form than among the Jibaros and Canelos

---

[1] Boas, *Fifth Report of the Committee on the North-western Tribes of Canada* (*Report of the British Association*, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1889), p. 849.

[2] Boas, *Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians* (*Report of the United States National Museum for* 1895), p. 435.

[3] Niblack, *The Coast Indians of Southern Alaska and Northern British Columbia* (*Annual Report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution*, 1888), p. 271.

[4] Niblack, *op. cit.*, p. 331.

Indians in Ecuador, to whom therefore I shall frequently refer in this chapter. It is indeed a tenet in the animistic philosophy of these Indians that trees and plants have their spirits or souls, just as have men and animals. According to the mythology of the Jibaros, as we have seen, " all animals have once been men," and although there is not a similar myth in regard to plants, their whole animism rests upon the belief that even the plants are in a way human—namely, in so far as the spirits that animate them are of the same kind as those animating the human body—just as they may once more, either for a longer period or only casually, take human form. The Jibaros speak to the plants as if they were endowed with human thought and feelings, and, when intoxicated by the narcotic drinks prepared from certain vines and herbs, the Jibaro Indian professes to see the spirits of these plants in a definite human form, namely, as remote ancestors of his. Even sex is attributed to each kind of tree or plant: some are supposed to be men, *i.e.*, to have a man's *wakani* or soul; others, again, are said to be women, *i.e.*, to have a woman's soul. This view also appears in the custom of giving the children the names of trees and plants, male children the names of such as are thought of as masculine, female children the names of such as are thought of as feminine.

The growth of trees and plants and the ripening of their fruits are due to the *wakani* or soul inhabiting them. As to their significance in the practical religion or superstition of the Indians, the same holds true as of animals: particular attention is paid to such trees and plants as are specially useful from an alimental point of view, or which distinguish themselves by certain striking properties. The worship paid to the garden crops and to medical plants will be mentioned later on. Again, of the trees that are regarded as " sacred " or have importance from a religious point of view, the *palm* must be mentioned first. Of palms there are, as we know, numerous kinds in South America, and many of them are extremely useful to the Indians, either because of their fruits, or because of the material they afford, or from other points of view. Among the first mentioned the *chontarúru*, or cultivated *chonta* palm (*Guilielma sp.*), is the most important. Its excellent fruits for a couple of months of the year make the most appreciated food of the Indians, and perhaps still more appreciated is the fermented beer that they are in the habit of making from them. The *chontarúru* palm has a man's *wakani*, and is therefore planted and tended by the men. At the time of the year when the fruits ripen, great festivals are held in connection with the preparation of the beer and the beer-drinking, dances being performed and incantations sung in order to "hurry on" the ripening and increase of the fruits, and the fermentation of the beer.

On the other hand, the *chonta* palm, both the one cultivated and the wild species (*Bactris, Iriartea*), are also regarded as demonic trees, on account of their large thorns, which play an important part in Indian sorcery. Among all Ecuadorian tribes, both east and west of the Andes, the medicine-men make a frequent use of *chonta* thorns for the purpose of bewitching their enemies. The Quichua-speaking Indians of Canelos and of the Rio Napo therefore call the magic arrow of the sorcerers *chunta*, and an Indian practising black magic is simply called *chunta shitac runa* ("a *chunta*-throwing man"). From this point of view the spirit of the *chonta* palm is an evil demon, called *iguanchi* by the Jibaros and *supai* by the Quichua-speaking Indians. This belief is in part also due to the iron-hard wood of the *chonta* palm, which is likewise used for magical ends. Thus, a lance made of *chonta* wood is supposed to possess by itself a magical power, and to inspire not only living men, but also spirits and demons with dread. Hence, at the great victory-feast of the Jibaros, the head-trophy (*tsantsa*) is always kept tied to a *chonta* lance whenever it is not needed for the ceremonies. The spirit of the slain enemy is thus kept at bay. The Napo Indians, for harpooning the enormously large fish *paichi* (*Arapaima gigas*), use harpoons of *chonta*, about three metres in length. The very fact that the harpoon is made of this demonic tree is supposed to make it easier to hit and kill the fish. For the same reason the blowpipes used for the poisoned arrows are always made of *chonta*.[1]

Other trees which hold a place in the religion or superstition of the Jibaros are, for instance, the *genipa* tree (*Genipa americana*) and the *guayusa* tree (*Ilex sp.*). Both these trees are regarded as "men." From the *genipa* fruit the Indians get the black dye with which they paint their body and face for warfare and on certain ceremonial occasions, and to which a magical power is also ascribed. The Jibaros say that they paint themselves black for warfare "in order to resemble the *iguanchi*" (demons). The *genipa*, therefore, is a demonic paint. Similar supernatural virtues are ascribed to the decoction made of the leaves of the *guayusa* tree, which has great importance as a tonic and a means of purification.

---

[1] Karsten, *Religion of the Jibaro Indians of Eastern Ecuador* (*Boletín de la Academia Nacional de Historia*, vol. iv., nums. 10 y 11, 1922), p. 9.

The most popular magical paint of the Indians, however, is prepared from the red seeds of the shrub *Bixa orellana*, which is one of the "sacred" trees in South America. We have seen what an importance this red paint has for the natives in all parts of the continent—even in those parts where they can get it only as an object of trade in intertribal commerce. The Jibaros told me that the roucou shrub is a "woman," and the name of the plant—*ipyáku* in the Jibaro language—as a matter of fact occurs as a woman's name. But the wonderful paint, the inherent power of which is due to the spirit animating the plant, is used both by women and men. I have already mentioned that the Jibaros and the Canelos Indians paint their face and body with this red dye for many different purposes, to have a protection against disease and witchcraft, or, in general, to acquire strength and power of resistance, to have good luck in hunting, to gain the love of women, and so forth.

I think we are certainly not wrong in assuming that the ideas pointed out above, with small variations, prevail all over tropical South America. The hints and indications or even direct statements that we can find in ethnological literature all point in this direction.

The essential identity which there is supposed to exist between the plant souls and the animal and human souls, appears, for instance, from what Professor Preuss tells us about the religious and mythological ideas of the Uitóto. It is a common feature in the Uitóto myths, says Professor Preuss, that animals and plants appear as men. Nay, often it is difficult to say whether the tribes bearing animal and plant names are meant to represent human tribes or not, for there is absolutely no distinction established between them and men, and they are sometimes even denoted as ancestors.[1] Similarly, of the Taulipang and Arecuna Indians in Guiana, Dr. Koch-Grünberg states that the personification of animals and plants, which is a characteristic feature in their mythology, is founded on a general theory of the animation (*Beseelung*) of nature. Just as every animal has a soul, so "all plants are animate, for they grow and die." Dr. Koch-Grünberg adds that plants only seldom appear as independently speaking and acting, and that the plants of which this is related are mostly magical plants, used by hunters and fishers and for the curing of diseases. Such personified medical plants appear as the most powerful assistants of the medicine-men at the cure. They are "like men," "like the shadows or souls of the trees."[1] Moreover, the few instances of plant totems that can be gathered from South America point to a similar view. Such plant totems are known to exist at least among the Arawaks, in addition to the numerous animal totems that they have. Just as there are clans named after animals, so there are clans named after plants, and Sir Everard F. Im Thurn states that, in the belief of most Arawaks, "each family is descended from its eponymous animal, bird, or plant." He adds that almost invariably these eponymous objects—animals and plants—"are such as are in some way very prominent in Indian life."[2]

---

[1] Preuss, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

That not only a human spirit, but even a sex, is ascribed to trees, also appears from the belief of the Cavinas in north Bolivia. To them the demon of the *kautschuk* tree is a woman. A myth of the Cavinas tells of a man who, in a dream, had intercourse with this demon, and died shortly afterwards. If the tree is beaten with a stick the spirit gets angry and will take revenge. But when the Indians tap the rubber-tree the spirit does them no harm, for the whites have obliged them to do it.[3]

The most important South American tree-cult—if so we may call it—is known from north-western Brazil, where it forms part of certain religious mysteries and puberty ceremonies. These are the famous Yurupary mysteries, still commonly celebrated by the tribes of the Rio Uaupés and its tributaries. But Koch-Grünberg, one of our authorities on this interesting cult, states that it is with minor variations spread over a large part of tropical South America.[4]

Yurupary, the "Great Spirit" of the Uaupés Indians, however, seems not to be exclusively a demon of the vegetation, but has a more general character. According to Wallace he is a bad spirit or devil whom the Indians fear and endeavour to propitiate through their *payés*. When it thunders they say that Yurupary is angry, and their idea of natural death is that Yurupary kills them. At an eclipse they believe that this bad spirit is killing the moon, and they make all the noise they can to frighten him away.[5] In this description Yurupary occurs as the name of an ordinary evil demon, of the kind known to all Indians.

---

[1] Koch-Grünberg, *Vom Roroima zum Orinoco*, Bd. II., *Mythen und Legenden der Taulipang- und Arekuna-Indianer*, pp. 20, 21. Idem, *Vom Roroima zum Orinoco*, Bd. III., *Ethnographie*, pp. 210, 211.

[2] Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, pp. 184 *sq.*

[3] Nordenskiöld, *Forskningar och äventyr i Sydamerika*, pp. 482, 526.

[4] Koch-Grünberg, *Zwei Jahre unter den Indianern*, i. 187.

[5] Wallace, *A Narrative of Travels in the Amazon and the Rio Negro*, p. 500.

On the other hand, Wallace tells us nothing about the Yurupary mysteries themselves, although he describes the trumpets with which the "Yurupary music" was produced. The most detailed account of these mysteries is given by the French traveller Coudreau. Yurupary, according to Coudreau, is the god of the Uaupés Indians, and at the same time their most remote ancestor, the father of their race. As an ancestor he has become immortal (a god) after death. Coudreau also emphasizes that "Yurupary a un caractère terrible et mauvais," and that he particularly proves fatal to women who happen to see his sacred trumpets and masks. But, considering that he is at the same time worshipped as a hero of culture and a producer of the fruits on which the Indians mainly subsist, we may conclude that he ought to be rather characterized as a dangerous than as a positively evil being. As a demon of vegetation Yurupary is evidently at bottom a *good* spirit, his bad reputation perhaps being due only to the taboo mechanically attached to his sacred instruments, and to the somewhat harsh character of the rites connected with his cult.

As a deity of the vegetation Yurupary is most of all active in certain useful palms, but also in other plants the fruits of which form the staple vegetable food of the Indians. The most important of the palms is the *paxiuva* (*Iriartea ventricosa*), of which the flutes and trumpets used at the feasts are made, and in which the spirit of Yurupary particularly manifests itself. The feasts are called *dabucuri*, and regularly take place at certain epochs of the year when the fruits grow ripe and the crops are gathered in. These feasts or mysteries will be examined more closely in a subsequent chapter. Here we are only concerned with the animistic ideas which evidently underlie them, and which throw an interesting light upon the Indian plant spirits in general.

Yurupary is a *lingoa geral* word, and denotes the principal demon of the ancient Tupinambas. Among the modern tribes the name has mainly survived in the Yurupary ceremonies themselves, and also in the names of several rivers and cataracts called after this feared being. But the relation of Yurupary to the plant demons and cultural heroes, still worshipped in the harvest festivals of the tribes of north-western Brazil, is not quite clear. Such deities of vegetation, according to Dr. Koch-Grünberg, are to be seen, for instance, in Koai of the Siusí and Milómaki of the Yahúna, which may well be compared with the ancient demon Yurupary. Of the Yurupary legend itself, there are different variations among different tribes,[1] but I prefer to relate the following myth, mentioned by Dr. Koch-Grünberg, by which the Yahúna tried to account for the origin of their Yurupary festivals. "Many many years ago a small boy came from the Great Water-house, the home of the Sun. He could sing so wonderfully that many people came from far and near to see and hear him. The boy was an Indian, and his name was Milómaki. But when those persons who had heard him returned home, and ate fish, they all fell down and died. Their relations therefore seized Milómaki, who meanwhile had grown up to a youth, and burnt him on a great pyre, because he was bad and had killed their brethren. The youth, however, continued singing to the last wondrously beautifully, and, while the flames were already licking round his body, he sang: 'Uadyudyau—uadyudyau—uadyudyau—uadyudyau—uadyudyau — uadyudyau — uadyudyau maki — uadyudyau — hé ! . . .' ('Now I die, my son, now I leave this world.') When his body swelled from the heat he went on singing in beautiful tones: 'Padyuleré—padyuleré—padyuleré — padyuleré — padyuleré—padyuleré — padyutilé—ré ! . . .' ('Now my body breaks down, now I am dead.') And his body broke down. He died and was consumed by the flames, but his soul rose to the heavens. From his ashes the very same day there grew a long green leaf. It grew perceptibly larger and larger; it spread, and the following day was already a tall tree, the first *paxiuva* palm, for previously there had been no *paxiuvas*. The men made big flutes of its wood, and these flutes rendered the wondrously beautiful melodies which Milómaki had sung. To this very day the men blow the flutes every time that the fruits *ingá*, *pupunhá*, *castanhá*, *umarí*, and others grow ripe, and dance in honour of Milómaki, who has created all fruits. But the women and the small children are not allowed to see the flutes. The former would immediately die of it; the latter would eat earth and also die."[2]

This myth is not, as one might feel inclined to think, merely a hymn to song and music, but has a deeper significance: it is a simple attempt to explain the supernatural or magical power which is ascribed to the *paxiuva* flutes. It is interesting especially from the point of view that, in its way, it illustrates a leading principle in Indian religion of which we have found numerous applications in the previous chapter, namely, that the human spirit is the original source of any supernatural power, even when it appears outside man in seemingly inanimate objects of nature. The supernatural effects of the *paxiuva* flutes—appearing especially in the influence they exert upon the ripening of the fruits—are due to the tones produced with them. These tones in reality prove to be identical with a human voice, the voice of the cultural hero Milómaki, whose soul is intimately associated with the palm of which the sacred flutes are made. The flutes cause certain useful fruits to ripen, by conjuring the spirits which are believed to animate these fruits. This is possible by virtue of the primitive principle, " Like is best known by like ": there is a human spirit, or the power of that spirit, in the flutes; there are also human spirits—souls of departed Indians—in the trees or plants which are influenced by the flute-playing. Again, the fact that the sacred instruments are kept secret from women and children, who might die if they see them, is due to a common Indian taboo notion. The flutes have, during the conjuration, been in contact with death-spirits, who have been compelled to enter them, and are therefore afterwards infected and highly dangerous to all uninitiated persons.

---

[1] See Stradelli, *La leggenda del Jurupary* (*Bolletino della Societá Geografica Italiana*, Roma, 1890), pp. 659-689 and 798-835.

[2] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, ii. 292 *sq.* On the Rio Aiary the Yurupary ceremonies take place at the time when the fruits of the palms, *assai* (*Euterpe oleracea*) and *bacába* (*Œnocarpus bacaba*) grow ripe (Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 187).

The other details of the Yurupary mysteries will be mentioned later on, in connection with the Indian ideas of conception. For the moment we have only to establish the fact that the said mysteries are essentially based on the idea of human spirits animating the useful trees and plants, and that they can only be satisfactorily explained by taking these animistic ideas into account.

The Cachimana mysteries on the upper Orinoco, mentioned by A. von Humboldt, have much the same character. Cachimana is a plant demon, just as is Yurupary. He is a " Great Spirit," who reigns over the seasons and makes the fruits ripen. During the ceremonies performed in his honour a sacred flute called *botúto* is blown under the palms, in order that they may produce abundant fruits. The flute, which is about three or four feet long, is not made of palm wood, but of burnt clay, a material to which the South American Indians commonly ascribe some mysterious magical power. Flagellations, fasting, and other rites are also, or were formerly, connected with the feast. Sometimes Cachimana himself was supposed to blow the trumpet, sometimes he only revealed his will through the man who had to keep the sacred instrument.[1] These religious ceremonies are founded on exactly the same ideas as the Yurupary mysteries: the palms are believed to be animated by spirits who cause the growth of their fruits, and these spirits are conjured or favourably influenced through the *botúto*. Moreover, the taboo attaching to the sacred flute is of the same kind as in the Yurupary mysteries and in other Brazilian death-feasts. No woman, we are told, may even look at the flute; if by accident any woman happens so see it, she is without mercy put to death, generally by poison.[2] It is no doubt believed that the death-spirit will invade the woman and not only kill her but also, through her person, other people.[3]

The Indian belief in plant spirits is also illustrated by the animistic ideas of the Chaco Indians. Among the different tribes of the Pilcomayo region, the Matacos, the Chorotis, the Tobas, and the Ashluslay, agriculture, in the proper sense of the word, is comparatively little practised. So much the more appreciated from an alimental point of view are certain wild fruits which form the staple vegetable food of the natives. The most important of the trees, the fruits of which are utilized as food, are: the *algaroba* (*Prosopis alba*), the *tusca* (*Acacia aroma*), and the *chañar* (*Gourliea decortitans*). The algaroba especially plays an important part in the economic life of the Indians, and its sweet, pod-like fruit practically feeds them for two or three months of the year. The algaroba-season, which begins at the end of November and lasts until the beginning of February, is therefore impatiently awaited by the natives, and they try to " hurry on " its coming by various magical means. The Matacos, for instance, are in the habit of beating the drum every night for about one month, previous to the commencement of the algaroba-season, in order, as they say, to expel the evil demons that prevent the fruit from reaching maturity, but also with a view to directly influencing the spirit which is believed to animate the tree. The Tobas, again, perform a special dance with the same object, namely, to "hurry on" the algaroba, beginning some time before the fruit ripens, and continuing this ceremonial dance during the whole algaroba-season. All these customs are founded on the belief that in each of the trees and plants there resides a "good spirit" which effects their growth and brings their fruits to maturity.[1] The most interesting application of this belief is found in the other custom, prevailing among all Chaco tribes, to brew intoxicating drinks of the fruits mentioned, and first of all of the algaroba bean.

---

[1] v. Humboldt, *Reise in die Aequinoctial-Gegenden des neuen Continents*, iii. 323.

[2] v. Humboldt, *op. cit.*, iii. 324.

[3] That this is the true reason for putting the women to death in such cases is not expressly stated, but it is in accordance with a common Indian idea that an evil demon who takes possession of a person will not only kill that person but also, through him, endanger the whole community. In this way we have, no doubt, to explain the custom, prevailing among many tribes, of killing women who have happened to see the masks, bull-roarers, or flutes used at the religious ceremonies.

Dr. K. Th. Preuss, in his essay on the origin of religion and art, has pointed out that among primitive peoples, and especially among the Indians, the drinking-bouts have frequently a purely religious, or rather magical character. Intoxicating liquors of different kinds are drunk first of all with a view to increasing the natural magical power of the body. As typical instances of peoples whose drinking-bouts have this character Dr. Preuss mentions the peoples of Mexico, especially the Tarahumara.[2] That among the Indians of South America the same magical ideas are largely connected with intoxicating and narcotic drinks, we shall presently see. But whereas Dr. Preuss is right in pointing out the general sacredness of certain intoxicating liquors and the ceremonial character of the drinking-feasts, he is mistaken when he assumes that the magical power (*Zauberkraft*) which is ascribed to them has nothing to do with animism, but belongs to that "pre-animistic" stage in the evolution of religion, of which, according to his interpretation of the facts, so many traces are to be found among primitive peoples. The magic of the intoxicating and narcotic drinks affords a most excellent instance of a supernatural power or *mana* which is undisputably of purely animistic origin. The beer which the Chaco Indians brew from algaroba or other fruits derives its power *from the very spirit which animates the tree, and is especially present in its fruits.* When the beverage is fermented, the indwelling spirit is supposed to have developed its power to the highest point. The fermentation, therefore, to the Indian is a mysterious process, and is "hurried on" by various ceremonies, as the beating of drums, the shaking of rattles, etc., by which the spirit is favourably influenced to the desired end. Moreover, when the Indian is intoxicated by his beer he says that he has been possessed by a "good spirit," which will give him strength and power of resistance against evils of every kind. Such ideas not only occur in Chaco, but in other parts of South America also where intoxicating drinks are used. I shall have reason to mention them again when dealing with the garden plants, since in tropical South America the native beers are mostly brewed of certain cultivated plants.

---

[1] Karsten, *Beiträge zur Sittengeschichte der südamerikanischen Indianer* (*Acta Academiæ Aboënsis.* Humaniora, i: 4, 1920), p. 29 *sq.* Idem, *Indian Dances in the Gran Chaco* (*Öfversigt af Finska Vetenskaps-Societetens Förhandlingar*, Bd. LVII., 1914-1915, Afd. B, No. 6), p. 15. Idem, *The Toba Indians of the Bolivian Gran Chaco* (*Acta Academiæ Aboënsis.* Humaniora, iv., 1923), p. 44 *sq.*

[2] Preuss, *Über den Ursprung der Religion und Kunst* (*Globus*, Bd. LXXXVIII., 1905), p. 418.

Professor von den Steinen, after giving an account of the magical ceremonies with which the Xingú tribes tried to propitiate the game killed, as well as certain large fishes, in order to render them suitable as food, makes the significant additional statement that "the same system is extended to certain fruits, the *pikí*, the *mangoven*, and the maize, the most delicious."[1] This implies that the said plants are believed to be animated by spirits, the souls of dead Indians, and that therefore their fruits, to which the taboo of death is attached, cannot be eaten without danger until they have been "blessed" by a *bari* or sorcerer.[2] There are several instances to show that such ideas are not limited to the Xingú Indians, but are commonly held by those tribes where agriculture has attained a higher importance. The most important of the garden crops in tropical South America is the manioc, and at least among some tribes special manioc-feasts are celebrated, which are founded on the idea of a spirit animating the plant. This may be said, for instance, of the *okīma* or manioc-feast of the Uitóto Indians, the character of which in some details is obscure but which at any rate seems to have for its general aim to effect an abundant crop of manioc.[3] Such is the object of the manioc-feasts among certain Ecuadorian tribes also, which I shall presently mention. First I may draw attention to the following myth from eastern Brazil, which seems to me to be typical of the general Indian idea. The myth runs as follows: Many years ago, the daughter of a great Indian chief, who lived in the region where there is now the town Santarém, became pregnant. The chief wanted to revenge, on the author of his daughter's dishonour, the wound his pride had suffered. In order to learn who he was he had recourse to entreaties, threats, and lastly to chastisements. But both during the entreaties and the chastisements the girl remained firm, declaring that she had had no intercourse with a man. When nine months had passed she gave birth to a wondrously beautiful white female child which excited admiration, not only within the tribe, but also among neighbouring peoples who came to see this creature of a new and unknown race. The child received the name Mani, and grew very rapidly, but at the end of one year she died, without being ill and without showing signs of suffering. She was buried in the house according to the custom of the tribe, and the tomb was irrigated and well tended. After some time there sprouted from the tomb a plant which, since it was quite unknown to the Indians, they did not pull up but allowed to remain. It grew, flowered, and gave fruits. The birds which ate of the fruit became intoxicated, and this phenomenon, being unknown to the Indians, increased the superstitious ideas they had about the plant. At last it faded and fell on the ground; they dug about it, and in the fruit which they found in the earth they recognized the body of Mani. They ate of this fruit, which thus they learnt to know, and they called it *Mani oca* (*mandioca*), which means " the house or transformation of Mani."[1]

---

[1] v. d. Steinen, *Unter den Naturvölkern Central-Brasiliens*, p. 493. Cp. also Cook, *Through the Wildernesses of Brazil*, p. 408.

[2] See *supra*, p. 278.

[3] Preuss, *Religion und Mythologie der Uitóto*, p. 132.

This myth is interesting from many points of view. It not only illustrates the Indian belief in a supernatural birth; it shows above all that the manioc plant is, by the Indians, believed to be animated by a spirit which is in its nature a human soul, and more strictly speaking, the soul of a woman. It is remarkable, however, that Mani, whose soul has taken its abode in the manioc, is a white woman, a fact which seems to indicate that the Brazilian tribe we are dealing with had learnt to know the manioc through the whites, although this root is endemic in South America. However this may be, the idea that useful garden plants are animated by female spirits is again and again met with in South America. Nevertheless, there are exceptions to this rule, as we shall presently find.

I have already mentioned the animistic ideas held about trees and plants by the Jibaros and Canelos Indians in eastern Ecuador, and, as I pointed out, these Indians go so far as to attribute a particular sex to each kind of tree or plant. Big and hard species of tree, and plants with particularly strong properties, are regarded as " men."

---

[1] Couto de Magalhaês, *O selvagem*, ii. 134 *sqq.*

On the other hand, most, although not all, of the garden plants are regarded as "women." The most important of the female plants are the manioc, the batata or sweet potato (*Convolvulus batatas*), the carrot (*Daucus carota*), the bean, the earth-nut, and the pumpkin, whereas the plantain and the maize are the only garden plants that are regarded as men. This distinction with regard to sex in plants seems to be due to certain associations of ideas suggested by their outward appearance or their properties, but it is difficult to follow the train of thought of the savage in this respect. The cultivation of the plants that are conceived as feminine is naturally incumbent on the women, whereas the cultivation of the plantain and the maize, which are conceived as masculine, is one of the particular obligations of the men. Elaborate ceremonies are observed at sowing and planting, especially at the setting of the manioc sticks, during which the women appeal both to the Earth-mother Nungüi herself and to the individual manioc spirits (*tsanimba wakani*), for an abundant crop. A detailed account of these ceremonies is here out of place. Be it enough to state, that one of the greatest feasts of the Jibaros, the "feast of the women" (*noa tsangu*), particularly has reference to the manioc and other garden plants, its object being to secure a rich harvest.[1] Taken as a whole, the ideas and customs of the Jibaros relating to agriculture may be said to be typical at least of the tribes of the Amazonian territory.

Before we leave the manioc, attention may be drawn to the fact that the most popular national drink of the Indians in tropical South America is brewed from the manioc root, and that the sacredness ascribed to this beverage is due to the spirit which is believed to animate the plant. What has been stated about the native beers brewed from algaroba and other wild fruits in Gran Chaco, also holds true of the manioc-beer. From a religious point of view the manioc-beer is even more important than that made of algaroba. Thus the *paiwari* of the Guiana Indians and the *kaschiri* of the Brazilian Indians, two beverages that play the main part in religious feasts, and especially in the death-feasts, are prepared from the manioc root.[2] The general object of the drinking-bouts on such occasions is to give the drinkers power of resistance against evil spirits by enhancing the natural *orenda* of their body. This idea nowhere appears more conspicuously than among the Indians of eastern Ecuador, where the manioc-beer or a kind of manioc-wine, prepared with special ceremonies, is considered indispensable at all religious feasts. Thus, at the great victory-feast of the Jibaro Indians, celebrated when the head of an enemy has been acquired, every important ceremony ends with the general drinking of a strong manioc-beer, and at the end of the whole feast the wine is ceremonially consumed by the warriors. Without the drinking of this sacred liquor, it is believed, the object of the feast would not be attained.[1] In Ecuador, as in other parts of South America where fermented drinks are in vogue, the fermentation is always brought about by chewing the fruit and mixing it with saliva. The saliva, which shares the natural magical power of the whole body, is supposed favourably to influence the spirit that is active in the fermented drink. These are the main ideas which seem to underlie the fermented drinks and their preparation everywhere in South America.[2]

---

[1] For more details, see Karsten, *Contributions to the Sociology of the Indian Tribes of Ecuador* (*op. cit.*), p. 2 *sqq.*

[2] See, for instance, Im Thurn, *op. cit.*, pp. 263 *sq.*, 319 *sqq.* Koch-Grünberg, *Zwei Jahre unter den Indianern*, i. 168 *sqq.*, 254 *sq.*, etc.

Of native cereals cultivated in South America, as indeed in the whole New World, maize is by far the most important, and what has been said of the manioc in the main holds true of the maize also. When the Jibaros, as we have seen, regard maize as a "man," this is rather an exceptional idea, for, as a rule, both maize and other cereals are everywhere else conceived as feminine. Thus the notion about a Corn-mother or Corn-maiden is met with, not only in both continents of the New World, but also in different parts of Europe, especially among Aryan peoples, and in Africa, just as the idea about a Rice-mother particularly occurs in India.[3] As to the North American Indians, the idea about a Corn-mother appears in a typical form, for instance, among the Cherokee who invoke the maize spirit under the name of the Old Woman. Formerly the most solemn ceremony of the tribe was the annual green-corn dance, celebrated as a preliminary to eating the new corn. Much ceremony also attended the planting and tending of the maize. Thus, when the corn was growing, a priest went into the field with the owner, and built a small inclosure in the middle of it. There the two sat on the ground, and the priest, rattle in hand, sang songs of invocation to the spirit of the corn.

---

[1] See Karsten, *Blood Revenge, War, and Victory Feasts among the Jibaro Indians of Eastern Ecuador*, pp. 45, 79-80, 85, etc.

[2] See Karsten, *Beiträge zur Sittengeschichte der südamerikanischen Indianer* (*op. cit.*), p. 28 *sqq.*

[3] See Frazer, *Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild*, pp. 131 *sqq.*, 178 *sqq.*

Soon a loud rustling sound would be heard. It was the Old Woman bringing the corn into the field; but neither of the men crouching amidst the corn might look up till the song was finished. This ceremony was repeated on four successive nights.[1] Of special interest are the elaborate ceremonies performed in honour of the Mexican maize goddess Chicomecoatl, but they cannot be dealt with here. The Mexican cult of the maize spirit bears a great similarity to the corresponding cult of the ancient Peruvians, of which I shall presently give an account.

In South America there are very few traces of a cult of the corn spirit east of the Andes. In fact, apart from the beliefs of the Jibaros and Canelos Indians mentioned before, there are only indirect evidences of such a cult, probably only owing to the deficiency of our information. The Indians living on the eastern slopes of the Bolivian Andes, the Avas or Chiriguanos, and other tribes of the great Guarani-group, as well as the Chanés who have adopted the Guarani culture, to a great degree subsist on the cultivation of maize, but their religious ideas were not properly studied before they came under the influence of European civilization. The national drink of these Indians is the maize-beer, *chicha* or *cangüi*, and in regard to this sacred drink the ancient beliefs seem still to be upheld. Of the great drinking-feasts of the Avas, called *arete* in their own language, we know that they were formerly—as they are in part still—magical or religious ceremonies, through which the *añas* or spirits were conjured, and there is little doubt that they were based on the same ideas as such drinking-feasts generally are among the Indians. In the sacred drink the corn spirit itself was believed to be present. Even to-day the great chicha-feasts of the Avas have throughout a ceremonial character, being not seldom connected with dancing, etc.; and every important occurrence in a family—a marriage, the birth of a child, a death—must be celebrated with excessive drinking of maize-beer.[2]

The Baure Indians, another Guarani tribe in north-eastern Bolivia, have a curious superstition about their maize-fields: when the maize is blooming, we are told, they do not enter their maize-fields, lest the spirits should steal their souls.[3] The statement, rather brief as it is, does not admit of any positive inferences, but it seems natural to presume that the spirits which might steal the souls of the Indians are nothing but the corn spirits themselves. The spirits inhabiting the plants reach a critical point of development at the time of flowering, and may then prove dangerous to persons who come in close contact with them.

---

[1] Mooney, *Myths of the Cherokee* (*op. cit.*), p. 423.

[2] See Karsten, *Indian Dances in the Gran Chaco* (*Öfversigt af Finska Vetenskaps-Societetens Förhandlingar*, Bd. LVII., 1914-1915), p. 22 *sqq.* Idem, *Beiträge zur Sittengeschichte der südamerikanischen Indianer* (*op. cit.*), p. 33.

[3] Nordenskiöld, *Indianer och hvita*, p. 145.

Most clearly, however, the Indian conception of the corn spirit and of other plant spirits appears in certain superstitious practices of the ancient Peruvians. Our earliest authority on these Peruvian cults is Father Acosta, S.J., who resided in Peru during the years 1569 to 1585. But we find in the classical work of Father Bernabé Cobo, who travelled in the land of the Incas at the beginning of the following century, the Peruvian maize-cult mentioned in almost the same words.[1] I prefer to quote Father Cobo, who describes the cult as follows: "In this month (the sixth month, called *hatun-cuzqui*, answering to May) they gathered and confined the maize with a certain feast called *aymoray*, which they celebrated fetching the maize from their plantations and farms, performing dances and singing songs, in which they prayed that the maize would last long and not run short until the following harvest. . . . In this month they also performed certain ceremonies to the *Mamazara*, which was a universal *guaca* that everybody held in his house, and they made them in the following way: Everybody took from his maize plantation a certain portion of maize which was particularly well developed, and with certain ceremonies put it in a small granary, called *pirua*, wrapped in the richest garments they had, and there they watched over it for three nights. Thereafter they covered the said granary, worshipped it, and held it in great veneration, saying that it was the mother of the maize of their inheritances, and that by this means the maize would multiply every year and be preserved. Every year at this time they made a particular sacrifice to it, at which the witches asked the said *pirua* whether it had sufficient strength to continue until the next year. And if it disposed the witches to say no, and that this was the answer which the granary gave them, they carried this maize to the plantation to burn with certain rites, and made another *pirua* with particular ceremonies, saying that they renewed it to the end that the seed of maize may not perish. And if it answered that it had sufficient force to last longer, they left it to the next year. This *guaca* was universal in the sense that, although it existed in all houses, everybody offered adoration only to his own *guaca*, without paying attention to that of his neighbour."[1]

---

[1] Another description of the feast *aymoray* is given by a contemporary of Cobo, Father Ramos Gavilán, in his *Historia de Nuestra Señora de Copacabana*, p. 125. Whether these three ecclesiastical writers have really written independently of each other is a question difficult to decide. The agreement between Cobo and Acosta on this point is so close that it is impossible to withhold the suspicion that the former has used the latter as his main authority.

The *pirua*, of which Cobo speaks, was probably only a miniature granary, particularly made for keeping the *Mamazara* (Maize-mother). Again, the proper object of worship was, of course, the dressed-up bunch of maize, and not the granary, which only served as an abode for the maize-goddess. But it is natural that in practice the reverence paid to the maize-goddess would blend with the reverence paid to the granary where she was kept. The granary thus, together with the image embodying the corn spirit, could justly by Cobo be called a *guaca*, the general name used by the Peruvians for sacred places inhabited by mysterious spirits.[2]

Further details about the Peruvian plant worship are given by a third ecclesiastical writer, Father Arriaga, S.J., whose work on the extirpation of the Peruvian idolatry gives us several interesting notices about superstitious beliefs and customs prevailing in the ancient Inca empire. The Peruvians, we are told, believed that all useful plants are animated by a divine being, who causes their growth. These divine beings were called the Maize-mother (*Zaramama*), the Quinoa-mother (*Quinuamama*), the Coca-mother (*Cocamama*), and the Potato-mother (*Axomama*). Figures of these divine mothers were made respectively of ears of maize and leaves of the quinoa and coca plants; they were dressed in women's clothes, and a sort of worship paid to them. According to Arriaga there were three kinds of maize-mothers or *Zaramamas*. " The first was like a puppet made of stalks of maize and dressed up like a woman, with her *anaco* and *llicilla* (women's clothing) and her *topos* (big ornamental needles of silver), and it is understood that as a mother it has the power of producing and giving birth to much maize. There are also *Cocomamas*, of the same kind, for the augmentation of the coca. Others are carved of stone in the likeness of cobs of maize with the grains laid bare; and of these they keep many as *conopas* (household gods). A third kind consists of some fruitful stalks of maize, which, owing to the fertility of the ground, had given many and large cobs; or of two maize-cobs naturally joined together. These are the principal *Zaramamas*, and are revered as mothers of the maize, and they also call them *Huantayzara* or *Ayrihuazara.* To this third kind they do not pay the same worship as to a *huaca* or a *conopa*, but they keep them superstitiously as sacred things. They hang the stalks together with various cobs on some branches of *sauce* and dance with them a dance which they call *ayrihua.* When the dance is finished they burn them, and offer them as a sacrifice to *Libiac* in order to get a good crop. With the same superstition they keep such maize-cobs as have turned out particularly painted, and which are called *Micsazara* or *Mantayzara* or *Caullazara*, as well as others which are called *Piruazaras.* Such they place superstitiously upon the heaps of maize and into the *piruas* (where they keep the maize), to be guarded there. Another superstition they have with them they call *Axomama* (the Potato-mother): for when two potatoes were found growing together they kept them in order to get a good crop of potatoes."[1]

---

[1] Cobo, *Historia del nuevo mundo*, iv. 108, 109 *sq*. Acosta, *Natural and Moral History of the Indies*, bk. v., c. 28, p. 374 (Hakluyt Society).

[2] It is not necessary, therefore, to assume, as Sir James Frazer does, that Acosta had misunderstood his informant when he relates that the granary (*pirua*) itself was worshipped by the Peruvians (Frazer, *op. cit.*, i. 172). Acosta's statement on this point, as we have seen, is confirmed by Cobo, and by Father Ramos, and is not necessarily at variance with that of Arriaga. But Acosta's description of the Peruvian maize-cult contains another evident mistake, when he says that the bunch of maize, brought from the fields, was by the Peruvians called *Mamacora*, and that this was asked by the sorcerers whether it had strength to continue until the next year. *Cora* in Quichua means " weeds," and since the meaning, of course, cannot have been to procure a prolonged life for the weeds, the word cannot be correct. Acosta no doubt intended to say, and has perhaps originally written, *Mamazara*.

From this statement it appears that to the Peruvians also the maize deity, just as the quinoa spirit, the coca spirit, and the potato spirit, was thought of as a woman. The maize puppet, dressed up in full female attire and regarded as a Mother, " had the power of conceiving and giving birth to much maize." Further, the " worship " paid to the four plant spirits was a conjuration based on much the same principles as the ordinary mask-dances. The spirits of the plants were magically influenced by being outwardly imitated. From this point of view we must also explain the dance *ayrihua*, performed with the principal *Zaramama*, the fruitful stalks of maize. Some particularly good specimens of the plant were taken to represent the whole species; the spirits dwelling in these few stalks having been favourably influenced, it was thought that—according to the principle *pars pro toto*—the whole maize-field which they represented was likewise influenced in the desired direction. Such magical dances, the object of which is to promote fertility, are known from different parts of South America, and, as we have seen, in a typical form occur for instance in the Gran Chaco. In addition to the statements I have made before on this point, I may mention a dance which the Mataco Indians once performed at the sugar factories in northern Argentine for the purpose of promoting the growth of the sugar cane. A bundle of sugar canes tied together was held in an erect position on the ground by two men, and the other Indians danced and chanted around it, as they declared, to "hurry on the cane," that is to say, to influence the spirit inhabiting the plant.[1]

---

[1] Arriaga, *Extirpación de la idolatría del Perú*, p. 16. Cp. Villagomez, *Carta pastoral de exortación e instrucción contra las idolatrîas de los indios del arzobispado de Lima*, fol. 40, § 23. Cp. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 343 *sq.*

The customs mentioned above were not the only ones in which the religious or superstitious reverence paid to the maize spirit by the ancient Peruvians found expression. Father Cobo relates that among the numerous *guacas* or sacred places round Cuzco there was a hill called Mantocalla, which was held in great veneration, and where certain sacrifices were made when the grains were removed from the maize-cobs. On this occasion, various imitation-sheaves, consisting of carved pieces of wood and dressed up like men and women, were placed upon the hill, together with a great number of wooden maize-cobs. Great drinking-bouts having been held, various sheep were burnt together with the said wooden sheaves and cobs, and some children were also sacrificed.[2] These rites belonged to a category of magical sacrifices which were very common in ancient Peru, and which I shall deal with at some length in a subsequent chapter. It is enough here to state that the object of the sacrifices was evidently to transmit the spiritual power embodied in the victims to the maize spirits, and thus to give them renewed vigour for the next season.

Down to the present time superstitious practices are in vogue among the Quichuas and Aymará in connection with the cultivation of the maize. Thus, at Tarija in Bolivia, a cross is set up at harvest in the maize-fields, and on it all maize-spadices growing in pairs are hung. They are called *Pachamamas* (Earth-mothers), and are thought to bring good harvest.[1]

---

[1] Karsten, *La religion de los Indios Mataco-Noctènes de Bolivia* (*Anales del Museo Nacional de Historia Natural de Buenos Aires*, tomo xxiv., 1913), p. 210.

[2] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 25 *sq.*

The fact that most garden plants are regarded as feminine also explains woman's prominent part in agriculture in primitive societies. According to the principle "Like is best known by like," only a woman can properly influence female plant spirits, and make them grant fertility to the fields and an abundant harvest. This idea still seems to be very much alive among Indians unaffected by European civilization and has powerfully influenced the social position of the Indian woman.

Our investigation of the Indian plant spirits would be incomplete if we left their medical plants out of account. The rôle that plants play in primitive Indian medicine is exceedingly important, but I do not propose to treat of the subject at large, especially as the necessary material for a thorough examination is lacking. The facts that I shall adduce are mainly results of my own investigations in South America, and they consequently only refer to a few tribes, although we have good reason to assume that the ideas I have found may be taken to express the general Indian view.

The word "medicine" is here taken in a broad sense, and under the term "medical plants" I accordingly include not only such plants as are used for strictly curative purposes, but in general all plants to which marvellous or "supernatural" virtues are ascribed. Of great interest are those plants from which narcotic drinks are prepared. These drinks, which, owing to the poisonous properties of the corresponding plants, are capable of producing visions, hallucinations, and a state of ecstasy, have a particular importance in the native religion; but their use is naturally limited to the purely tropical or sub-tropical parts of the continent where plants possessing such properties are to be found. Among these plants tobacco holds the first place. Long before the white man arrived in the New World the tobacco plant was cultivated in both continents and used by the natives as a magical medicine and a means of expelling evil spirits. It is only due to European influence that some Indians of our own days smoke tobacco for pleasure. The original ceremonial use of this narcotic plant can still be studied among the lower tribes of tropical South America. The importance which, for instance, the

---

[1] Nordenskiöld, "Travels on the Boundaries of Bolivia and Argentina," in *The Geographical Journal*, xxi., 1903, pp. 517, 518.

Indians of eastern Ecuador ascribe to the tobacco as a magical medicine is enormous, but much the same ideas and practices seem to prevail in the whole Amazonian territory. The Jibaros, whose beliefs I know best, fancy that the tobacco spirit (*tsangu wakani*) is a masculine being; hence only the men may cultivate the plant and prepare the medicine. But, as is the case with most medicines of this kind, once prepared, it can be administered to women as well as to men. Tobacco is mostly taken in liquid form, the leaves being either boiled in water or chewed in the mouth and mixed with saliva. When used at the great feasts, the medicine is always prepared with saliva, which is thought to enhance its magical effects. Sometimes, moreover, big cigars are made of the leaves, and the person in whose honour the feast is held gets the smoke blown into his mouth by another man. In this way the Jibaros use tobacco at the feast *kusúpani* (" tobacco-smoking feast "), with which a youth is initiated into manhood.

In liquid form the tobacco medicine is given to women especially at the feast *noa tsangu* (" the tobacco-feast of the women "), which is celebrated when a young girl is about to marry. A long time before the feast proper is held, when the fields of manioc, plantain, sweet potatoes, beans, etc., are prepared for the new household, the woman already has to partake of the wonderful medicine to promote their growth, and at the feast it is ceremonially administered to her in various doses by an old woman. The general idea connected with the tobacco-feast is to impart to the future housewife strength and ability for the various domestic works and duties, which are incumbent on a married Jibaro woman. The spirit of tobacco will entirely take possession of her and fill her with a mysterious power, not only for the moment, but for many years onwards, and this power will, as it were, be automatically transferred to all departments of her activity. The spirit will, through her person, exert a favourable influence upon the crops, making the plantations grow rapidly and bear fruit abundantly, and upon the domestic animals, the swine and the fowls, confided to her care, so that they will get fat and increase in number. The woman will also be able to serve her husband well and to educate her children properly. All this is effected by the tobacco, or, more strictly speaking, by the spirit of the plant, upon which a mysterious influence has been exerted through the ceremonies of the feast.

Among most tribes tobacco is, moreover, the particular medicine of the professional medicine-men and sorcerers. When among the Jibaros a person wants to become a medicine-man he has to fast strictly, but is obliged to take tobacco-juice in great quantities. When he is about to cure a patient he begins his treatment by draining a large dish of tobacco-water, and the spirit of tobacco is invoked to assist him.[1]

Dr. Koch-Grünberg states, with reference to the Arecuna and Taulipang Indians of Guiana, that the plants, which appear in the myths of these tribes as independently speaking and acting, are mostly magical plants, used by hunters and fishers and for curing diseases. Such personified medical plants figure as the most powerful assistants of the medicine-man at the cure.[2] Exactly the same may be said of the medicines used by the Jibaro sorcerers, and particularly of tobacco.

Among other magical medicines of this kind two narcotics, which play an important rôle in native divination, deserve to be particularly mentioned. One is prepared from the vine *Banisteria caapi* (belonging to the family *Malpighiaceæ*), and is in Ecuador best known under its Quichua name *ayahuasca*. The wild Jibaros call both the vine and the drink prepared from it *natéma*. The plant also occurs at the Rio Uaupés and its tributaries in north-west Brazil, at the cataracts of the Orinoco, as well as in the Amazonian parts of Colombia, and is everywhere used in much the same way by the natives—*viz.*, for the purpose of divination. The Brazilian Indians prepare the drink without boiling the plant. A piece of the lower part of the stem is cut off and beaten in a mortar with water. When sufficiently steeped, it is passed through a sieve, which separates the woody fibre; and to the residue enough water is added to render it drinkable. Among the Ecuadorian Indians the stem, after being crushed with a club, is boiled for one or more hours, and, moreover, juice of tobacco and some other vegetable ingredients are added, to enhance the narcotizing effects of the drink.[1]

---

[1] For more details, see Karsten, *Beiträge zur Sittengeschichte der südamerikanischen Indianer* (*Acta Academiæ Aboënsis.* Humaniora, i:4, 1920), p. 55 *sqq.* As to the ceremonial use of tobacco in South America, see also Lery, *Histoire d'un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil*, pp. 212, 213. Baro, *Relations véritables . . . et curieuses du Brésil*, p. 300 *sq.* Laet, *Guilielmi Pisonis de Medicina Brasiliensi, libri quatuor*, pp. 281, 282. v. Martius, *Beiträge zur Ethnographie Amerika's*, i. 522, 586, etc. Ehrenreich, *Beiträge zur Völkerkunde Brasiliens*, p. 62. Lafitau, *Mœurs des sauvages Amcriquains*, i. 333; ii. 137, etc. Cardús, *Las misiones franciscanas entre los infieles de Bolivia*, p. 80. Medina, *Los aborigenes de Chile*, p. 249.

[2] Koch-Grünberg, *Vom Roroima zum Orinoco*, Bd. II., *Mythen und Legenden der Taulipang- und Arekuna-Indianer*, p. 20.

Another narcotic used by the Indians of eastern Ecuador is prepared from the rind of the bush *Datura arborea* (of the family *Solanaceæ*). The rind is not boiled, but the essence in it is simply pressed out with the hands and taken as a medicine by sorcerers and warriors, with a view to provoking a state of ecstasy and divinatory dreams. This narcotic, which is much stronger than the one prepared from the vine *Banisteria caapi*, is called *huantuc* in Quichua and *maicoma* in the Jibaro language.[2]

For my present purpose, however, it is of particular importance to point out the religious ideas with which the *ayahuasca* and the *huantuc* are connected. The strange mental conditions, including all sorts of visions and hallucinations, provoked by these narcotics are ascribed to the demons animating the plants, with whom the Indians are believed to enter into an intimate contact when intoxicated by the medicines. Moreover, the said demons prove to be nothing but ancestral spirits or souls which have in some way been transmitted to the plants. In narcotic sleep these demons appear to the Indian in hideous forms, as tigers, anacondas, or giant snakes, crocodiles, eagles, etc. They speak to him with human voice, give him advice, and reveal future events to him. These demons are by the Jibaros called *arútama* ("the Old Ones"). They are the ancestors of the Indians, and they were great warriors. Only the Jibaro man who has seen the "Old Ones" in the dream, and been spoken to by them, can hope to be a successful warrior. But the medicine-men and the wizards especially seek the assistance of these demons, because otherwise they will be unable to carry out their functions of curing diseases or of sending such away by witchcraft. If *huantuc* or *maikoma* is particularly the narcotic of the warriors, *ayahuasca* or *natema* is considered indispensable to the medicine-men, but the visions and ecstatic conditions provoked by these strong narcotics are said to be much the same.[1]

---

[1] The narcotic prepared from the vine *Banisteria caapi* is mentioned by several travellers, most of whom, however, are able to tell very little about it. See, for instance, Spruce, *Notes of a Botanist on the Amazon and the Andes*, ii. 414 *sq.*; Crevaux, *Voyages dans l'Amérique du Sud*, p. 536; Hardenburg, *The Putumayo; The Devil's Paradise*, p. 86; Whiffen, *The North-West Amazons*, p. 139 *sq.*; Villavicencio, *Geografia de la Republica del Ecuador*, p. 372 *sqq.*; Koch-Grünberg, *Zwei Jahre unter den Indianern*, i. 298 *sq.*; Reinburg, *Contribution à l'étude des boissons toxiques des Indiens du nord-ouest de l'Amazone* (*Journ. de la Soc. des Américanistes*, nouv. ser., tome xlii., 1921), p. 25 *sqq.*; Karsten, *Beiträge zur Sittengeschichte der südamerikanischen Indianer* (*op. cit.*), p. 39 *sqq.* In my own essay I have given the first account of the religious ideas connected with this narcotic plant.

[2] The *huantuc* or *maicoma* is very seldom mentioned in literature, and I have myself given the first detailed account of this narcotic (see Reinburg, *op. cit.*, p. 212 *sqq.*; Karsten, *op. cit.*, p. 48 *sqq.*).

Among other narcotic plants in South America, we have to mention the coca (*Erythroxylon coca*), which is the most important of the medicines in vogue among the mountain Indians of Peru and Bolivia, although certain primitive tribes in the Amazonian virgin forests are also known as coca-chewers.[2] We remember that the ancient Peruvians, among the plant deities which were the objects of their adoration, had also a Coca-mother (*Cocamama*), represented by a puppet made of coca leaves. There is little doubt that the belief in the supernatural virtues of the coca, which has prevailed in Peru since olden times, has a purely animistic basis. These virtues are due to the spirit animating the plant. As the tobacco, so the coca is regarded as a means of enhancing the magical power of the body, and as an efficacious antidote against evil spirits. Such superstitions are easily explained from the naturally stimulating effects of this plant. Up to the present day, the Quichuas and the Aymará are wont to throw quids of coca into precipices, and other dangerous places on the mountains, which they have to pass during their wanderings, in order to stupefy the evil spirits residing there. Similarly, coca is offered to the spirits at the foundation of buildings, etc. The true nature of these " offerings " we shall examine later on.

There is one magical " medicine " more, which ought to be mentioned in this connection, because in its way it illustrates both the Indian idea of plant demons and the Indian idea of *mana*. This medicine is the one used by the Indians of tropical South America for poisoning their arrows. Of arrow-poisons there are several kinds in South America; but the only one about which we have known anything is the *curare* or *ourali* of the Macusi Indians in Guiana, studied a hundred years ago by Waterton, and later by Richard Schomburgk. In Guiana certain species of the *Strychnos* afford the principal ingredients for the *curare* poison, and the same poisonous plants seem to be used, for instance, by the Ecuadorian and the Peruvian Indians, although not exclusively. The Canelos Indians enumerated to me twenty-five different plants from which they prepare their arrow-poison; the Jibaros on the Morona for the same purpose use only ten sorts of plants. But although the modes of preparing the poison may vary in some details among different tribes, the ideas underlying the use of it seem to be everywhere the same.

---

[1] As to the religious ideas connected with the tobacco, as well as with the *ayahuasca* and the *huantuc*, see Karsten, *op. cit.*, p. 61 *sqq.*

[2] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 267 *sqq.*; ii. 289 *sq.*, etc.

Even Waterton and Schomburgk mention certain superstitious practices which, in Guiana, are connected with the preparation of the *curare* poison. The cook himself seems to be a kind of sorcerer who veils his operations in great mystery. No woman, particularly no pregnant woman, can stay in the house or near the place where the poison is prepared. If a woman visited that place, and came into any contact with the boiling pot, the evil spirit, *yabahou* (forest demon), would do her harm, and so forth.[1] Much more detailed was the information which I received myself among the Ecuadorian Indians as to their superstitious beliefs and practices. In each of the plants from which the arrow-poison is prepared there resides a spirit or demon to whom the plant owes its poisonous properties. It is this demon—called *supai* by the Canelos Indians, and *iguanchi* by the Jibaros—that kills the victim when the poisoned arrow penetrates into its body. In conformity with this idea, the arrow-poison is at Canelos called *supai hambi* ("the devil's medicine"), *hambi* being among these Indians the general name for a magical drug. When the sorcerer has to prepare the poison he retires to the forest, where he must stay for several days and nights, strictly fasting. The boiling of the poison can only take place at night, and while it goes on the cook sings incantations to the *supai* of the plants. His whole operation amounts to a conjuration by means of which he subdues the demon and "develops" its power for his own purposes. The poisonous gases which rise from the boiling pot are regarded as an expression of the anger of the conquered demon, and when, after days of fasting, the cook returns from the forest pale and weak, his condition is said to be due to his fight with the superhuman powers. The same ideas prevail among the Jibaros. Before the cook retires to the forest he ties up his long hair in three plaits and paints himself red in the face with roucou, in order to acquire power of resistance against the treacherous spirit. Even later, after he has returned to the house, he is supposed to be haunted by the demon, who sucks him at the breast and the shoulders and visits him with evil dreams at night.[1]

---

[1] Waterton, *Wanderings in South America*, p. 57. Schomburgk, *Reisen in British-Guiana in den Jahren* 1840-1844, i. 452 *sqq*. Cp. v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 653-660.

The arrow-poison, and all the magic medicine of the Indians, thus offers one interesting instance more of a supernatural power or *mana* in plants, which is obviously of purely animistic origin. Sometimes the *mana*, active in the poison and in the narcotic medicines, seems to be conceived as an impersonal force; but in most cases, as appears from the above facts, it is conceived as a personal spirit identical with the plant soul itself.[2] It was the same principle that was found to apply to certain medicines obtained from the animal world—for instance, *uturúncu*-fat, llama-tallow, and fetishes prepared from parts of the body of the giant snake—but it naturally appears more clearly in regard to the plant medicines, which decidedly predominate in the magic art of the Indians. The establishment of this connection between *mana* and spirit—in addition to establishing the existence of a general belief in plant souls similar to the human and the animal soul—may be set down as the main result of the inquiries of which this chapter gives an account.

Next we have to examine the nature of the spirits inhabiting what civilized people would call inanimate objects of nature.

---

[1] For more details about the religious ideas connected with the Indian arrow-poison, see Karsten, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-27.

[2] That ideas of this kind are by no means limited to the tribes studied by myself, may be inferred from the fact that Dr. Koch-Grünberg also found them among the Guiana Indians. According to Dr. Koch-Grünberg, the magical power of the plants, which the sorcerer makes use of when curing disease, depends on the soul or animating principle in the plant (Koch-Grünberg, *Vom Roroima zum Orinoco*, Bd. III., *Ethnographie*, p. 210 *sq.*

CHAPTER XI

SPIRITS OF INANIMATE OBJECTS

IN dealing with South American animism relative to inanimate objects, my especial task will be, first, to establish the general character of the spiritual beings which, according to Indian belief, people mountains, rocks, stones, precipices, caves, heavenly bodies, etc.; and secondly, to inquire whether there is any connection between these spirits and the supernatural power or *mana*, which is commonly ascribed to certain fetishes or " medicines " obtained from the mineral kingdom. Both the one task and the other are difficult owing to the scarcity of the material, and it is needless to say that in this, just as in my chapters on the animal and the plant spirits, I am only able to present probability evidence in support of the theses which mark the chief results of my inquiries.

In South American nature worship, there is no more salient feature than the religious reverence paid to mountains, rocks, and volcanoes, in those parts of the continent where the natives have been confronted with such striking natural objects. All over the mountain regions in western South America, from Colombia to Tierra del Fuego, the high summits and peaks of the Andes, and especially the fire-spitting volcanoes, have been looked upon as the dwelling-places of powerful and dangerous spirits, whom the Indians have tried to propitiate with valuable offerings, sometimes even with human sacrifices. The best records of this nature worship we have no doubt from Peru, where once it formed an essential part of the Inca religion, and where numerous traces of the ancient beliefs and rites have been preserved among the half-civilized Quichuas and Aymará up to the present day. The word most commonly used by the Peruvians, formerly, as in our own days, for mysterious spirits inhabiting conspicuous places, seems to be *achachila*. Mr. Bandelier, whose work on " The Islands of Titicaca and Koati " is undoubtedly the most important contribution to our knowledge of modern Aymará culture, states " that the number of achachilas is immense. Every summit, every gorge, every spring—in short, every site more or less prominent—is thought to be inhabited by such a spirit. Meteorological phenomena also are included, such as lightning, the rainbow and the clouds. . . . The rainbow (*kurmi*) is achachila, and at Tiahuanaco they forbid children to gaze at it lest it might kill them. In short, the achachilas are the 'Guacas' or 'Huacas' of Peru." The sun and the moon are achachilas, and such spirits also reside in the earth. The most instructive instances of achachila worship, according to Bandelier, were the ceremonies performed previous to excavations for antiquities, and without which no such work is expected to be successful.[1] Some of the elaborate ceremonies which the medicine-men used to perform on these occasions and at which coca, llama-tallow, grape-brandy, and certain other fetishes and medicines played an important part, will be mentioned in the next chapter. For the moment we have only to establish the belief in these spirits and to examine their true nature.

Achachila is an Aymará word, and, according to Bandelier, literally means "grandfather." It is almost identical with the word *pacarina,* which likewise means "grandfather" or "ancestor" of *ayllu* (clan) or tribe.[2] This seems to indicate that the achachilas are in their nature nothing but ancestral spirits or souls of past generations, which have taken up their abodes in conspicuous natural objects and continue to exert an influence upon the welfare of their descendants. The Peruvian nature worship thus, in its way, illustrates that peculiar Indian view, which not only obliterates the boundary between man on the one hand and the animal and the vegetable kingdom on the other, but regards even inanimate nature as endowed with a conscious life and will. It may, however, be necessary to point out at once that South American nature worship does not support the hypothesis, expressed by many modern students of religion, according to which an inanimate object of nature is worshipped for itself, or simply because it is believed to possess supernatural power. Such students do not think the object is worshipped because there is thought to be a spirit dwelling in it. It may of course be argued that the latter notion cannot be really "primitive," since a primitive mind is not able to make a distinction between the material thing itself and the spirit dwelling in it.[1] Whether this "pre-animistic" interpretation of nature worship is justified at all, is a question with which we shall not deal here. At present we are only concerned with facts, and, as we shall find, these facts plainly show that at any rate South American nature worship is founded on a purely animistic conception. The belief of the Peruvians, at which the very word *achachila* seems to hint, that their "ancestors" reside in mountains, rocks, etc., is an instance to show that the ideas uncivilized peoples have about the objects of their religious veneration may be remarkably definite and concrete. And there are other statements, relating both to the Peruvians and to other South American Indians, which tell us the same.

---

[1] Bandelier, *The Islands of Titicaca and Koati,* p. 100; part iii., note 98 (p. 150); p. 96.

[2] Bandelier, *op. cit.,* p. 94; part iii., note 112 (p. 159).

Ecuador is particularly the country of the volcanoes, and there is sufficient reason for assuming that these volcanoes were objects of a devoted worship on the part of the natives even before the Inca invasion. The highest and most prominent of them is the ever snow-clad Chimborazo, which formerly seems to have been held in great veneration by the inhabitants. The Indians alleged that they were descended from this mountain, and precious sacrifices of young virgins, daughters of lords, and llamas were made to the deity.[2] A recent Ecuadorian writer states that there are good grounds for the assumption that Cotopaxi, another of the highest burning mountains of Ecuador, was likewise formerly worshipped by the natives.[3] This can, indeed, be put forward as a fact, since there are still traces of the cult once paid to it. Among the half-civilized Indians of the Andes, as I have found out myself, the medicine-men, when they have to cure patients, are in the habit of invoking especially the powerful demons of Chimborazo and Cotopaxi, from whom they expect assistance in their operations. According to a belief prevailing all over the mountain regions of Ecuador, chills, catarrhs, and other diseases are sent by the snow-clad mountain peaks and volcanoes, which are inhabited by the spirits of dead medicine-men. The same demons that have sent the evil must also be compelled to cure it. Even the primitive Colorados who live far in the virgin forests of western Ecuador have this belief about Chimborazo and Cotopaxi, although these volcanoes are hardly visible from their country. The Colorados call the volcano spirits, as also other evil spirits, by the name *jukang;* they are souls of departed Colorados, and, more strictly speaking, souls of dead medicine-men. These demons, together with the spirits of the "angry lagoons," who are also *jukang,* are always invoked by the Colorado medicine-men when they are exercising their profession.[1] In south-eastern Ecuador we have the formidable Sangay, which is by the Jibaro Indians looked upon as *iguanchi hea* ("the abode of the demon"). *Iguanchi* is the name with which the Jibaros denote the most dreaded of their evil spirits, and they are of human origin. Where the *iguanchi* are associated with stupendous phenomena of nature, which suggest a very evil character, they are regarded as the spirits of medicine-men or sorcerers.

---

[1] See Westermarck, *Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, ii. 596. With particular reference to the nature worship of the South American Indians, this theory has been set forth by Sr. Jijóny Caamaño, in his work, *Religion del imperio de los Incas*, pp. 92, 342, etc.

[2] Jijón y Caamaño, *op. cit.*, p. 330, note 1. Cp. Fray Juan de Paz Maldonado, quoted by Bandelier, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

[3] Jijón y Caamaño, *op. cit.*, p. 321.

As to the Peruvian mountain peaks and volcanoes, we have already seen that they were, according to native belief, inhabited by *achachilas,* which were in their nature ancestral souls. Bandelier on this point makes an interesting statement with special reference to Misti, a great volcano in southern Perú, which shows how deeply the Indian mind is impressed by such grand objects of nature. "Misti and the volcanoes in general were regarded (and are regarded to-day in secret) as fetishes of high rank. In regard to Misti, this was plainly shown during the terrible eruption of the Omate near Moquegua in 1800. When the eruption was at its height, the city of Arequipa plunged in darkness, volcanic ashes falling steadily, the earth shaking, and tremendous thunder bellowing, while a lurid light faintly illuminated the south-eastern skies, the Indians, dressed in red, killed their sheep, fowl, and guinea-pigs, and began to dance, sing, and drink immoderately. Some of their wizards, after sacrificing llamas to the volcano, were said to have claimed "that they spoke to the devil, who informed them of the catastrophes that were to take place."[2]

The statement that the wizards, sacrificing to the volcano, claimed to "speak to the devil" seems to indicate that Peruvians had the same idea about these natural objects as have been current in Ecuador: the volcanic achachila were evidently spirits of medicine-men or wizards. The belief in achachilas inhabiting volcanic mountains is also illustrated by a kind of divination through coca leaves, mentioned by Bandelier. The conjurer takes certain coca leaves, perfect in form, which are to represent the spirits of the localities where the object or subject of the consultation is at the time. "The shaman selected three coca leaves as representing, respectively, La Paz, Arequipa, and Puno, the first through the achachila of Illimani, the second through that of Misti, and the third through that of some height near Puno."[1]

---

[1] Karsten, "The Colorado Indians of Western Ecuador," in *Ymer*, 1924, p. 146.

[2] Bandelier, *op. cit.*, part iii., note 153 (p. 161).

Nowhere in America has the worship of mountains played a more important part than in ancient Mexico, and facts related by Sahagun show, with unmistakable evidence, that the spirits who were believed to dwell in mountains and volcanoes were not only human souls, which had taken up their abode in these natural objects, but in some cases souls of evil-minded Indian sorcerers. The latter idea is obvious in regard to such volcanoes as, for instance, Popocatepetl—one of the most venerated in Mexico—and Orizaba or Poyauhtecal, to which certain diseases were ascribed, for, according to Indian belief, diseases are sent by evil sorcerers. Sahagun relates that both volcanoes and other prominent mountains were regarded as gods, "especially where they accumulated clouds for rain." They also believed that diseases like chills and rheumatism were sent by the heights, which, as they were able to send such sufferings, were also able to liberate patients from them. For this reason the Mexicans made sacrifices and offerings to the mountains, selecting always the particular hill which was situated nearest to the suffering person.[2] This statement shows that the ancient Mexicans had exactly the same ideas about mountain spirits as, for instance, the Indians of Ecuador and Peru.

In Chile likewise, the mountains, and especially the volcanoes, were the objects of worship. Thus Aconcagua was held in particular veneration, and sacrifices not only of animals, but even of men, were offered to it.[3] Similarly, there is interesting evidence of mountain worship from Tierra del Fuego. On this point, however, we have less information about the channel Indians than about the Onas of the mainland. From what Sr. Gallardo states about the religious ideas of the Onas it appears that they worshipped both mountains and other inanimate objects of nature. The mountains, as they believe, have once been men, just as also the sun, the moon, the stars, the yellow earth, the wind, etc. One of their most feared spirits is the demon of the black stones and the dark abysses which is represented in mask-dances. They stand in such awe of the mountains, Gallardo relates, that one would never hear them say, " What a bad mountain to climb," and they do not allow anybody to behold for a long while any of these objects of their reverence. They go so far as to say that if one speaks badly of a mountain in its presence, it will get angry and send rain and winds.[1]

---

[1] Bandelier, *op. cit.*, p. 126. Arriaga relates in a general way that the Peruvians adored high mountains and hills and certain big stones, and that they had a thousand legends about them, believing, for instance, that they were men who had been changed into stones (*Extirpación de la idolatría del Perú*, p. 11).

[2] Sahagun, *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España*, pp. 35-37, 159, etc. As to mountain worship in ancient Mexico, see the details given by Jijón y Caamaño, *op. cit.*, pp. 316 *sqq.*, 356 *sqq.*

[3] Cieza de León, *Segunda parte de la cronica del Perú*, c. 28, p. 111.

Dealing with the Onas we are already outside the proper territory of the Andes, and among Indians who represent " primitive " South American culture. As we shall find, however, there is no essential difference between the animistic beliefs of the half-civilized mountain Indians in the west, and those encountered among the savages in the virgin forests east of the Andes. On this point I may, in the first place, mention the ideas of nature spirits which I have myself found among the Indian tribes inhabiting the eastern slopes of the Ecuadorian cordilleras, and which may be regarded as typical, at least for the culture of the Amazonian Indians. Of special interest are the beliefs of the Jibaros. Among spirits inhabiting conspicuous places and localities, the demons of the hills and mountains are the most important. The hills are looked upon as the dwelling-places of dead sorcerers, whose souls have transmigrated into them. When wandering on hills and mountains, especially such as they have not visited before, the Indians keep silence and do not shoot with their guns for fear lest the demon of the hill should get angry. When noises occur in the interior of the mountain whilst they pass it, they say that it is *iguanchi* who is beating his big drum or is expressing his displeasure at having been disturbed. The big signal drum of the Jibaros, called *tundui*, is even said to be an imitation of the *tundui* of the *iguanchi* living in the hills. The demons of hills and mountains, being spirits of medicine-men and sorcerers, are also believed to send disease. Hence the *neidya iguanchi* (the hill demons) are often invoked by the Jibaro medicine-men when they are curing their patients. Most feared are the snow-clad mountains and volcanoes.[2]

---

[1] Gallardo, *Los Onas*, pp. 338, 339.

[2] Karsten, *Religion of the Jibaro Indians of Eastern Ecuador* (*Boletin de la Academia Nacional de Historia*, vol. iii., No. 6, 1922), p. 11.

In ascribing chills and other diseases to such inanimate objects of nature, the Jibaros, as we have just seen, hold an idea which is universally spread all over the mountain regions of western America.

Exactly the same belief prevails among the Quichua-speaking Canelos and the Napo Indians. The demons of the high cordilleras (*úrcu supai*), who are nothing but souls of mighty Indians chiefs and wizards, are the objects of great veneration, and still more the *rázu úrcu supai*, the demons of the snow-clad mountains.[1] Among the Napo Indians it happens that an old man, when he is about to die, points out a special height or hill in which his soul will take up its abode on leaving the body. It is easy to understand that the relatives of the departed Indian will afterwards show religious reverence to that height.

Although the Canelos and the Napo Indians communicate with the Quichua-speaking peoples of the *Sierra*, there is no reason to assume that the former have borrowed their ideas about mountain spirits from the latter. This we may conclude from the fact that similar ideas are found to prevail in other parts of South America also, among tribes which cannot possibly have been influenced by the Indian civilization in the west. I am particularly thinking of the interesting mountain worship which is known from Guiana. In dealing with the Indian rock-engravings, as they occur, for instance, in Guiana, I have in a previous chapter adduced certain facts in support of my view that these expressions of a primitive " artistic sense " must be wholly explained from Indian superstition, or, more strictly speaking, from the belief in mysterious spirits inhabiting mountains and rocks.[2] That these works of petroglyphy are in some way connected with native superstition seems also to be the opinion of Dr. Roth,[3] who, moreover, quoting other writers on the Guiana Indians, has much to tell us about the worship they pay to rocks and other natural objects. To what extent everything that is mysterious in nature strikes the Indian imagination and gives rise to superstitious beliefs, especially if the strange object is connected with a strange event, is testified by Sir Everard F. Im Thurn, who states that if the eye of the Indian falls upon a rock in any way abnormal and curious, and if shortly after any evil happen to him, he regards rock and evil as cause and effect, and perceives a spirit in the rock.[1] Dr. Roth himself observes that "the belief on the part of the Indians in the presence of mountain spirits in certain localities would seem to have been due in large measure to one or another of three sets of causes—peculiarities in conformation, marking, position and other features of the rocks; the supposed transformation of the person or animal into stone; or the association of the locality with some remarkable event that took place in the long ago."[2] The same principles, no doubt, also underlie Peruvian mountain worship. It should, however, be noticed that one set of causes need not necessarily exclude the other. Thus, some peculiarity in a rock's conformation, or some remarkable event associated with the locality, may, to a primitive mind, be the ground for the assumption that it is a person or an animal transformed into stone.

---

[1] Karsten, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

[2] See *supra*, p. 261 *sq.*

[3] Roth, *op. cit.*, p. 237: " The remarkable petroglyphs, scattered through the Guianas, to which so many travellers have drawn attention, are in the same way credited with a supernatural origin."

In Guiana the fear and awe awakened by the spirits of peculiarly-shaped rocks especially appears in the superstitious idea that it is extremely dangerous to point at such a rock with the finger or to talk about it. To point the finger at a spirit, Dr. Roth says, is a serious matter. "We have the Old Man's Rock in the Essequibo, which a murdered buckeen continually haunts, and at which it is dangerous to point the finger. So also there is a large bare rock standing with its head about six feet above the water, close to the Three Brothers Islands in the same river, concerning which the natives entertain a most curious superstition. They believe that, if any individual points at this rock, a heavy storm will immediately overtake him for his audacity."[3] Sir Everard F. Im Thurn, in his account of Indian animism, goes on to make the following interesting statement on the veneration paid to rocks: "In very dry seasons, when the water in the rivers is low, the rocks in their beds are seen to have a curious glazed, vitrified appearance, due probably to deposits of iron and manganese. Whenever I questioned the Indians about these rocks, I was at once silenced by the assertion that any allusion to their appearance would vex these rocks, and cause them to send misfortune. Again, in midstream in the Essequibo River, there is the curiously-shaped rock called *paiwari-kaira*, the upper part of which is very large, but rests upon a small pillar-like base. Not only do the Indians allow no mention of this rock to be made, lest it should be vexed, but they will not even look at it, nor, if they can prevent, allow others to look. . . . Almost every rock seen for the first time, and any rock which is in any way abnormal, whenever seen, is believed to consist of body and spirit."[1]

---

[1] Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p. 354.

[2] Roth, *op. cit.*, p. 235.

[3] Roth, *op. cit.*, p. 239.

Such statements not only plainly show that the worship of mountains and rocks among the Guiana Indians is a worship of *spirits* which are as such clearly distinguished from the natural object itself, but, moreover, suggest that these spirits are in their nature human souls which have become associated with these inanimate objects. Otherwise it would in fact be impossible to understand the numerous legends, current all over Guiana and on the Orinoco, about men transformed into stones, about rocks that are the "ancestors" of certain tribes, etc. Thus Coudreau relates that the Atorais, an Arawak tribe, regarded certain enormous blocks of granite as some of their local warriors who, after death, have been changed into stone.[2] Dr. Roth mentions several legends of this kind, which are closely founded on an animistic belief relative to earth, rocks, and stones. The Mapoyas, the Salivas, and the Otomacs, all three Orinoco tribes, had beliefs of this nature. The last-mentioned used to say that a stone, made up of three parts, and arranged in the form of a pyramid upon the summit of a high promontory of rocks called Barraguan, was their earliest ancestress; and that another remarkable rock, which served as the summit of another pinnacle, two leagues distant, was their first ancestor. Being consistent, they believed that all the rocks and stones, of which the said Barraguan was formed, were each of them one of their predecessors. Of the Otomacs we are, moreover, told that although they buried their dead, they dug up the skulls at the end of a year, and placed them in and among the crevices and holes between the rocks and stones constituting the promontory mentioned, where they expected them in their turn to change into stone. The Mapoyas would call such a stone as that serving for the summit of the pinnacle just mentioned *Uruana*, describing it as the source of their tribe, and would be delighted at anyone speaking of them as *Uruanayes*, in allusion to this fact.[1]

---

[1] Im Thurn, *op. cit.*, p. 354. Dr. Koch-Grünberg, during his travels in Guiana, was able to state the general prevalence of the belief in mountain spirits, *mauari*, who are in their nature souls of the departed, especially souls of departed sorcerers. These demons are invoked by the medicine-men when curing disease, and they are supposed to assist at the cure (see Koch-Grünberg, *Vom Roroima zum Orinoco*, Bd. III., *Ethnographie*, pp. 183, 196, 197, 380, etc.). The Guiana Indians thus have exactly the same ideas as are prevailing in the mountain regions of western South America.

[2] Coudreau, *La France équinoxiale*, ii. 346.

We have seen before that the Indians of northern South America, and especially the Arawaks, believe in the incarnation of human souls into animals, and that the totemistic systems which are found among them are probably connected with this belief. But, as appears from the statements just quoted, the Guiana and Orinoco tribes not only fancy that they are " descended " from certain animals, but also from inanimate objects, rocks, and stones, and there is little doubt that this belief, too, is founded on the theory of the transmigration of souls, as is indeed expressly stated in some cases. That the souls of certain persons should be attached to rocks appears intelligible, considering that even their bodies are supposed to be turned into inorganic matter. This belief of the Otomacs and some other Indians that, " after death, the body or skeleton itself is turned into stone, and so reverted to the very material from which some of them believed it to have originally sprung,"[2] is highly illustrative on this point, and reveals a mode of thought which is evidently primitive and genuinely Indian. The same idea is encountered in Peru, where individual persons, and even whole nations, were supposed to have been converted into stones by the Creator, as it is generally stated, in " punishment " for some sin committed. Certain stone pillars of peculiar shape were, in Tiahuanaco and in other places, regarded as petrified men and women.[3] Moreover, it seems to have been a common belief among the different Colla (Aymará) tribes, that their first ancestors had risen either from certain fountains and lakes (for instance, the great lake Titicaca), or from caves or clefts in certain rocks of extraordinary size.[4] A legend told that the Inca Manco Capac himself, as well as his brothers and sisters, had risen from a cave called Pacaritampu, from which they were alleged to have been born; but other nations also were said to have risen from the same cave.[5]

The above statements seem to show that the veneration paid to mountains, rocks, stones, and other inanimate objects among the South American Indians, is intimately connected with the worship of human souls, which is a prominent feature in primitive religion. The Peruvian cult of inanimate objects, in fact, turns out to be part of an elaborate system of ancestor worship. This is the conclusion at which we arrive, for instance, when we analyze the conception of *huaca*, the term used by the ancient Peruvians for everything that seemed to them extraordinary, mysterious, and "supernatural."[2] If we translate the word *huaca* by these adjectives, it is evident that it more or less answers to the Melanesian *mana*, and attempts have accordingly been made to explain *huaca* as a "pre-animistic" notion which has existed previous to the notion of personal spirits. Thus, Sr. Jijón y Caamaño, in a work on the Inca religion, has tried to show that the Peruvian *huaca* only signifies an "impersonal magical power" which is attached to "natural forces, to the dead, and to inanimate things," and, as such, has to be clearly distinguished from animism in the sense of a belief in personal spirits.[1] In his book, with its uncritical conglomeration of facts relating to the beliefs of primitive peoples in different parts of the world, Sr. Jijón has not, however, adduced evidence in support of his view which could really convince. The writer has *a priori* started from the assumption that in South America as elsewhere, what is now generally called "animatism"—involving the belief in an impersonal magical power—has preceded animism in the evolution of religious thought, and explains all Peruvian cults in accordance with this preconceived view—a method to which serious objections must be raised. The reverse method, proceeding from an unprejudiced analysis of facts to theory, as far as I can see, leads to a different result.[2]

---

[1] Roth, *op. cit.*, p. 145 *sq.*

[2] Roth, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

[3] de Molina, *Relacion de las fabulous y ritos de los Ingas* (*Colección de libros y documentos referentes a la Historia del Perú.* Tomo i., Lima, 1916), p. 6 *sq.* Betanzos, *Suma y narración de los Incas*, c. 1, p. 2.

[4] Garcilasso de la Vega, *Comentarios reales*, bk. i., cc. 10, 18.

[5] de Molina, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

Several attempts have been made to translate the word *huaca* (*guaca*), or to explain its true meaning. From these interpretations, of course, no definite and decisive conclusions can be drawn, since they may only express the more or less subjective views of European observers of a native cult. It is, however, important to notice the definition which von Tschudi, one of the best modern authorities on ancient Inca culture, gives of the conception of *huaca* in his dictionary of the Quichua language. *Huaca*, according to this writer, is every representation of the divinity, the divinity itself, every sacred object in which a divinity dwells; every temple or place which, in native belief, is inhabited by a god or bad spirit; the tombs and burial-places; every manifestation of extraordinary beauty or ugliness, the origin of which is outside the normal course of things—for instance, a woman who has given birth to two or more children; an egg with two yolks, monstrous children with more fingers than normal, with deformed limbs, with hare-lip, etc.; the great fountains which spring forth from between the rocks; small stones of various colours encountered in rivulets or on the sea-board; the precipitous rocks and high mountains; the Peruvian cordilleras.[1]

---

[1] Jijón y Camaño, *op. cit.*, p. 70 *sqq.*, 92, etc.

[2] See Jijón y Camaño, *op. cit.*, pp. 72-78.

If this definition is in the main correct—as we have reason to assume it to be—it is evident that the huacas were first of all localities or inanimate objects inhabited by spirits more or less personally conceived. It is a name applied to "divinity itself," to "sacred objects in which a divinity dwells," to "places inhabited by good or bad spirits," to "tombs and burial-places." From the rest of von Tschudi's statement it seems only to appear that the term *huaca* was, by the Peruvians, applied to striking phenomena which awakened fear and awe in them, and were therefore, in a general way, regarded as supernatural. However, if we analyze this notion of the supernatural, it will, at least in some cases, be disclosed, not as a mysterious magical power, but as a personal spirit which was looked upon as the cause of the strange phenomenon. Thus, when we hear that, for instance, twins to whom a woman had given birth, or monstrous children with deformed limbs, etc., were called *huaca*, this fact must be viewed in the light of the belief, common in South America, that when twins are born, one of them or both have been begotten by a demon, and that monstrous or in any way deformed children have likewise a demoniacal origin.[2] According to an ancient authority on the Quichua language, the Peruvians among other things used the expression *huaca puma runa* of a man "who has six fingers or toes on his hand or his feet, like the lion."[3] The puma or South American lion is looked upon as an evil spirit, and it is more than probable that a man affected with such a deformity was in some way associated with that spirit. Again, a mad Indian was called *huaca*

---

[1] v. Tschudi, *Die Kechua Sprache*, s.v. "huaca," ii., p. 292. v. Tschudi defines *huaca* in Spanish as follows: "Nombre de muchas significaciones; idolo, cosa sagrada, cosa sacrificada al Sol, como figuras de hombres, animales, de oro, plata ó madera; el templo, sepulcro; cosa extraña, nada común, sea de hermoso ó feo; mujer que pare dos hijos ó mas, mellizos, huevo de dos yemas; monstruo; fuentes caudalosos; piedrecitas de varios colores; torre alto, cuesta muy alta y parada; cerro alto; la cordillera del Peru."

[2] See *supra*, p. 147 *sq.*

[3] The vocabulary of Gonzalez Holguín, quoted by Jijón y Caamaño, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

runa[1]—a most significant statement when we consider that primitive peoples generally ascribe madness to possession by a demon.

The word *huaca* is Quichua, but is adopted by the Aimara language also. As to its signification, there is little doubt that it is related to the verb *huacana*, which means "to weep," "to wail." It is an easy conjecture that the substantive *huaca* originally simply signified "a place of wailing", and that this should have been so is by no means strange or surprising, considering the extremely important part ceremonial wailing plays in the religious life of the Indian, especially as a mourning custom. By loud wailing or shouting the Indians try to propitiate or frighten away dangerous death-spirits and evil demons in general. It seems, indeed, probable that the name *huaca* was first of all applied to tombs, or places where remarkable persons had been buried, the souls of which were honoured as supernatural beings exerting influence upon the welfare of the living. This hypothesis gains support by an examination of the nature of the sacred places which were honoured as huacas.

One of our best authorities respecting ancient Peruvian religion, and particularly respecting the cult with which we are now dealing, is Father Cobo, who, in his history of the New World, gives a minute description of the huacas. These sacred places were all situated in the neighbourhood of Cuzco, the capital of the Inca empire, along the four main roads which issued from the said cultural centre. Among the huacas which were situated on the first of these roads, the road of Chinchaysuyo, the following may be mentioned:

The first huaca was a stone called Michosamaro, located on the slope of the hill Totocachi: it was one of those men who, they fancied, had issued from the cave Pacaritampu, together with the first Inca Mancocapac. One of the women who came out with them from the same cave had killed him on account of some offence, and he had been changed into a stone. His spirit appeared in the same place, manifesting that sacrifices should be made to him there.[2]

Another huaca was called Patallacta: it was a house destined by the Inca Yupanqui for sacrifices to himself, and he died in the same house. The following Incas sacrificed to him there.[3]

A third huaca, called Racramirpay, was also a stone and had this history. In a battle which the Inca Yupanqui had with his enemies, an Indian appeared to him in the air and gave him victory. He came to Cuzco with the Inca, and was transformed into a stone.[1]

---

[1] Jijón y Caamaño, *op. cit.*, p. 76. Sr. Jijón, who has been able to consult some rare books on ancient Peru, in his work gives several definitions of the word *huaca* (see *op. cit.*, pp. 74-78).

[2] Cobo, *Historia del nuevo mundo*, iv. 10.

[3] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 10.

On the same road there was also an idol of solid gold called Inti-illapa ("Thunder of the Sun"). The idol had been made by Inca Yupanqui, and he regarded it as his *huauqui* or brother. There was also a house for it in the quarter of the town, called Totocachi. In the same house or temple was the corpse of the said Inca Yupanqui. The idol was honoured with sacrifices of children.[2]

Many of the huacas were fountains. One of these was dedicated to a queen with the name Mama Ocllo, "the woman most venerated among these Indians." Great sacrifices were offered to her.[3]

The huaca Colcapata was a stone into which a certain lord had transformed himself. Another great stone, called Collaconcho, was regarded as sacred because, when it was carried to a fortress, it fell three times and killed some Indians. On account of that incident it was worshipped as a huaca.[4]

The huaca called Guamanguachanca was a small tomb, the burial-place of a brother of Huayna Capac. It was worshipped because the brother of the Inca had died young, and in the belief that, by virtue of the veneration paid to it, none other of the Inca family would die at that age.[5]

Another huaca, called Vicaribi, was worshipped because it was the sepulchre of a great lord.[6]

On the hill Piccho a stone was honoured as a huaca, because somebody had been transformed into that stone.[7]

On the second of the great roads leading from Cuzco, the road of Antinsuyo, there was among others the huaca Antuiturco, a great cave from which the Indians of the village Goalla were believed to have been born.[8] The next huaca was a house called Pomamarca, in which the corpse of a wife of Inca Yupanqui's was kept. Children and other sacrifices were offered to her.[9]

There was also another huaca with the name Ayllipamba: it was a corn-field on a plain which was looked upon as the particular abode of the Earth-mother, Pachamama. Sacrifices of a special kind were offered to her there.[10]

---

[1] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 11.

[2] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 11 *sq.*

[3] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 13.

[4] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 14.

[5] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 16.

[6] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 20 *sq.*

[7] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 21.

[8] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 22.

[9] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 28.

[10] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 28.

The huaca Unugualpa was a stone, the sacred character of which was due to its human-like form. The Indians therefore worshipped it as a " remarkable thing."[1]

On the third road, the road of Collasuyo, there was the huaca Alpitán, which consisted of " certain stones in a cleft." The Indians related that they were men, sons of that hill, and that, through a certain accident which happened to them, they had been changed into stones.[2]

The huaca Tancaray on the same road was a sepulchre where, according to Indian belief, all the departed assembled at a certain time.[3]

Allavillay was another sepulchre where the lords of the *ayllu* (clan) with the same name were buried.[4]

The huaca Huanacauri was one of the principal centres of worship in the whole empire. It was situated on a hill about two leagues and a half from Cuzco on the road of Collasuyo, where, according to the legend, one of the brothers of the first Inca had been changed into a stone. The said stone was preserved and kept on the hill, where it was still in existence when the Spaniards arrived.[5]

On the fourth road, the road of Cuntinsuyo, there was, for instance, the huaca Payllallauto, a cave, into which, they said, a lady with that name, the mother of a great lord, had entered without reappearing.[6]

The huaca Quilca was an ancient sepulchre of a lord with that name.[7]

Many hills and stones became sacred because they were in one way or another associated with the sun. This was the case, for instance, with the huaca Chuquimarca: it was a temple of the sun upon the hill Mantocalla, where, according to the native belief, the sun frequently descended to sleep. Sacrifices of children and other offerings were made there.[8]

Father Cobo relates that in the neighbourhood of Cuzco there were three hundred and thirty-three huacas, besides certain other sacred objects to which the Peruvians paid religious veneration.[9] The Father does not enumerate them all, and even in regard to those mentioned it does not, in most cases, appear why they were worshipped. In my survey above of the huacas I have adduced such instances of these sacred places as are particularly significant, the true nature of their sacredness being indicated more or less clearly. From what is stated about them, it seems to me evident that these places were looked upon as abodes of spirits, which were in their nature deified human souls. Remarkably many of the huacas are stated to have been simply sepulchres of grand persons who in life had enjoyed particular esteem.[1] Others were stones which, through some peculiarity in their form or otherwise, had attracted attention, and into which such persons, according to native legends, had been transformed. Certain caves were huacas because men were believed to have been born from them or disappeared into them. Many of the huacas were hills, as to the spirits of which we have already established that they are human souls. Stones were also sacred because they were associated with the sun, the thunder, the wind, or other meteorological phenomena. The nature of these spirits will presently be examined.

---

[1] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 29.

[2] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 31.

[3] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 34.

[4] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 34.

[5] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 36. Cp. also, on the huaca Guanacauri, Cieza de León, *op. cit.*, c. 28, p. 149.

[6] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 41.

[7] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 45.

[8] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 25.

[9] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 46.

Among other localities which in ancient Peru were objects of religious veneration the *apachitas* deserve to be mentioned. They were cairns or heaps of stones accumulated at the roads in the mountain passes, on the tops of high hills, on cross-ways, etc. They were sacred places of much the same character as the huacas and objects of a sort of cult. The custom of erecting cairns on certain places, which are looked upon with superstitious fear, is encountered among primitive peoples in different parts of the earth, and has in the New World been practised not only in Peru and Bolivia, but also in Mexico, Nicaragua, and other parts of Central America. That the "cult" of sacred cairns is everywhere prompted by the desire to avert evils arising from spirits inhabiting certain localities, seems to me to be apparent from a closer examination. In regard to the Peruvian apachitas also, the information which both ancient chroniclers and modern ethnologists give about them is sufficient to establish their true nature.

---

[1] The anonymous author of the tract, *Relación de las costumbres antiguas de los naturales del Pirú*, expressly identifies the huacas with the sepulchres where sacrifices were made to the departed. Cp. for instance, "Estos sepulcros o *huacas* estuvieron mucho tiempo patentes," etc. (*Tres Relaciones de Antigüedades Peruanas*, p. 152); "aquellos sepulcros, llamados *huacas*" (*op. cit.*, p. 154). The same writer states that the caves also were called huacas, which is not difficult to understand since the Peruvians often buried their dead in caves. See *op. cit.*, p. 147: "Estos lugares naturales se llamaron en su lengua diferentemente, como las cumbreras *apachitas*, las cuevas *huaca*, los montes *orcos*, las fuentes *pucyu*, los cielos *huahua pacha*."

One of our earliest and best authorities on the Peruvian apachitas is Father Arriaga, who describes this " cult " somewhat as follows: " It was a common custom among the Peruvians, and is so even to-day, that when they climb certain hills, or get tired on the way, having arrived at a great stone which has previously been marked out for this purpose, they spit upon it (and therefore they call this stone and this ceremony Tocanca). . . . They also are in the habit of throwing coca or chewed maize upon such a stone . . . or they leave there their ujutas, or some old piece of clothing, or a huaraca, or a rope twisted of Sparto grass, or a bundle of ichu grass, or put other small stones upon it, and with this they say the fatigue will leave them. These heaps of stones they call, with a corruption of the word, apachitas."[1] The worship of apachitas is alluded to by several other ecclesiastical writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries,[2] being, as it was, one of those superstitious practices of the Peruvians, which the Spanish missionaries did their best to extirpate. Cobo, among the " offerings " made to these huacas, mentions coca, plumes of various colours, useless clothes and rags, as well as stones, " and of the stones thus offered," he says, " we now see numerous heaps on the roads." Cobo adds that they made these offerings " in order that the said huacas may let them pass and give them strength." As to ethnologists who have observed the same custom among the Quichuas and Aymará of the present day, I shall only quote a statement by D. Forbes, which shows that the worship of the apachitas in the mountain regions of Peru and Bolivia is still exactly what it was at the time of Arriaga. " All along the roads, or rather, tracks," he says, " especially in the higher and little-inhabited parts, numerous heaps or cairns are encountered, often of very considerable dimensions; they are called *apachetas;* and the Indian, when he passes them, invariably adds a stone, and if he has his quid of coca in his mouth he takes it out and throws it against the cairn, on which he occasionally sticks feathers or places one or more of his leather sandals, and mutters some words, probably a prayer. When he passes these cairns, the Indian is sometimes seen to pull a hair or two out of his eyebrows or eyelashes, and placing them before his mouth, to blow them away in the direction of the sun, probably as an offering."[1]

---

[1] Arriaga, *Extirpación de la idolatría*, p. 37. Since Arriaga's work is rare, I quote the passage which refers to the *apachitas :* " Cosa muy usada era antiguamente, y aora no lo es menos, quando suben algunas questas o cerros, o se cansan en el camino, llegando a alguna piedra grande, que tienen ya señalada para este efecto, escupir sobre ella (y por esso llama a esta piedra, y a esta ceremonia Tocanya) . . . coca o maiz mascado otras veces dejan allí las ujutas . . . o la Huaraca, o unas soguillas, o manoxillos de hicho, o paxa, o ponen otras piedras pequenas encima, y con esto dizen, que se les quita el cansancio " (Arriaga, *loc. cit.*). The Quichua word *ujutas* signifies sandals of llama skin; *huaraca* was a rope twisted of llama nerves or Sparto grass; the verb *tocana* (*tiucana*), to which the substantive *tocanca* is related, means " to spit."

[2] See, for instance, Ramos Gavilán, *Historia de Nuestra Señora de Copacabana*, p. 104. Morúa, *Historia de los Incas*, p. 231. See also Jijón y Caamaño, *op. cit.*, p. 281 *sqq.*

It is not necessary to dwell long upon the theories which have been set forth to explain the custom just described. Sr. Jijón, for instance, has recently expressed the opinion that the original idea connected with the apachitas was merely that of " a harmful magical power," which was believed to emanate from these localities, and which the savage Indian tried to avert by throwing stones on the place, just as one might stop a gap from which noxious gases are gushing out. In the course of evolution this impersonal power developed into a personal spirit, who was supposed to dwell in the same place, and the favour of whom the Indian tried to secure by making offerings of stones and other things to it. Lastly, the throwing of the stones even became an act through which the Indian entered into ceremonial union with the spirit that dwelt in the cairn.[2] This theory is nothing but an arbitrary construction, contradicted by the very facts Sr. Jijón himself mentions. There is no evidence whatever in support of the hypothesis that the Indians, by throwing the stones, are trying to ward off a noxious magical power; all the facts clearly show that personal *spirits* are believed to inhabit the places where stones are heaped up in the said way. Further, that the aim of the " offerings " placed on the apachitas, or the other ceremonies performed there (spitting, etc.), should be to enter into ceremonial union with the deity of the place, is likewise a wholly unwarranted assumption, notwithstanding the fact that on this point Sr. Jijón is able to appeal to the authority of Dr. Hartland. The theory set forth by this savant about the sacred cairns encountered among many uncivilized peoples, just as his explanation of the analogous practice of throwing pins into wells, of driving nails into trees, etc.,[1] reveals the influence of the anthropological school represented by Robertson Smith and his followers, but is absolutely untenable, at least in so far as South American customs of this kind are concerned. Nor can the ceremonies performed at the apachitas be called a " cult " in the proper sense of the word. I cannot agree with Mr. Bandelier when, in his definition of the apachitas, he states that they are " accumulations of prayer offerings made to a spirit supposed to reside at the place where they are raised."[2] It may be that " according to Pueblo interpretation each stone lying on twigs in one of these heaps signifies a prayer," and that " a sacrifice is always accompanied by a wish, whether expressed in a formal prayer or not."[3] But the stones thrown at the cairns, the rags, quids of coca, bundles of grass, etc., placed there, are no " sacrifices," if by a sacrifice we mean a gift offered to a supernatural being with a view to securing his goodwill. It is true that in some cases the said things have been interpreted as sacrifices by later Indians who have ignored the real meaning of the rite, or have wished to conceal its primitive character; and, in such cases, the offerings may even have been accompanied by formal prayers.[4] In essence, however, the superstitious practices connected with the apachitas form part of those ceremonies of riddance from evil which play such an important part among the Indians of South America, as among primitive peoples in general.[5]

---

[1] Forbes, *The Aymará Indians of Bolivia and Peru* (*Journ. Ethnol. Soc. London*, vol. ii., 1870), p. 45 *sq.* Bandelier was able to establish that the offerings of the Indians at the apachitas were addressed to *achachila* spirits, and he adds that these sacred places have their counterparts in the *tapu* of the New Mexico Tehuas, the little stone heaps around many of the pueblos in general, and in the Apache reservation of Arizona (*op. cit.*, p. 99; part iii., note 109 [p. 153]).

[2] Jijón y Caamaño, *op. cit.*, pp. 233, 234, 298.

As to the etymology of the word *apachita*, it is evidently derived from the Quichua verb *apana*, which means " to carry," " to carry away." In the causative form, *apachina*, it means " to make some one carry away." In the substantive, *apachita*, we have the termination *ta* added to the stem *apachi.* The etymology is significant. It is evident that the Indians, through the ceremonies which they performed at the apachitas, tried to get rid of some evil, the origin of which lay in the mysterious spirits inhabiting these places. At the cross-roads evil spirits are lurking, who cause the unpleasant hesitation felt by the strange wayfarer at such places and lead him astray. But the evil which particularly molests the travelling Indian is fatigue, for which likewise a supernatural cause is sought. At this very day it is a common belief among the Peruvian and the Ecuadorian mountain Indians that the tiredness and exhaustion which overtakes them when climbing the high cordilleras with their heavy burdens is caused by a demon which has its abode on the top of the hill. It is, therefore, natural that, reaching the top, he should try to keep off the evil demon by throwing stones at the place where he is believed to have his seat, thus ridding himself from, or preventing the fatigue coming from, the malicious being. In this way the apachitas have become places which "carry away" the fatigue of the travelling Indian. The stone is not only a natural weapon, but is, on account of its hardness, believed to possess supernatural power. But to use it as an "offering" or a "sacrifice," in the proper sense of the word, would evidently be meaningless, and would never occur to the Indian mind. The other things placed there have a similar significance. As to spitting, which among civilized peoples is a sign of abhorrence, it is among the Indians also an act of warding off harmful influences. Thus the rites performed at the apachitas, far from aiming at ceremonial union with a friendly deity, have, on the contrary, a professedly hostile character: their object is to avert or get rid of evil spirits.

---

[1] Hartland, *The Legend of Perseus*, ii. 228.

[2] Bandelier, *op. cit.*, part iii., note 109 (p. 159).

[3] Bandelier, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

[4] Dr. Boman, in his *Antiquités de la région Andine*, p. 487, mentions such a prayer to the apachitas, in vogue among the Indians of the Puna de Jujuy, but the very form of this prayer, with its many words borrowed from the Spanish, shows that these half-civilized Indians have been strongly influenced by the whites.

[5] Garcilasso de la Vega, with that tendency to idealize the religious ideas of the ancient Incas which is characteristic of him, gives an account of their worship of apachitas which is entirely misleading *Comentarios reales*, bk. ii., c. 4). What he relates about this cult only has interest as showing how a primitive rite can be misinterpreted from a higher religious point of view.

As we found, Bandelier states that even the apachita spirits are *achachilas*—that is to say, they are in their nature human souls and ancestors of the Indians. This is interesting to note in so far as it shows the homogeneity of the ideas which were the foundation of the Peruvian religion.

Some words may also be said about the South American water spirits. That Indian imagination should people rivers and lagoons and springs with mysterious supernatural beings, in the same way as other natural objects and elements, might *a priori* be expected. Yet it must be observed that there is no evidence of a special soul being ascribed to the water, and that the water spirits cannot properly be said to form a category of their own among the Indian nature spirits. The demons inhabiting the watery element, therefore, are essentially of the same kind as those inhabiting mountains, rocks, caves, animals, etc. Just as the latter, so the former are of human origin. Very often, for instance, the spirits which are believed to dwell in rapid rivers and cataracts are nothing but souls of Indians who have been drowned there. If an accident occurs in a cataract and the life of an Indian is lost, his spirit will afterwards haunt that cataract. I have found direct instances of this in Ecuador, but the idea is no doubt common in South America. Certain mysterious water deities of the Canelos Indians I also believe to have such an origin. A being of this kind is, for instance, the one called *huas runa supai*, a white woman-like form, which is seen to rise from the lagoons into the air and is believed to send disease. This demon, who is also known under the name of *yacu supai* ("the water demon"), is therefore summoned by the medicine-men in their incantations. A similar being is *yana rumi supai* ("the demon of the black stones"), who appears to persons intoxicated by the narcotic *ayahuasca* as an Indian sitting upon great black stones in the lagoons.[1] How places come to be looked upon as animated on account of startling events with which they are connected, is also shown in an instance referring to the Tobas in Chaco. At the village Tseihatanyi, near the River Pilcomayo, there is a great lagoon which, according to the belief of the Indians, is inhabited by *peyak* (evil spirits). The reason for this belief appeared to be that some time ago the fish in this lagoon had died from some unknown cause.[2] The *peyak* of the Tobas are in their origin probably souls of departed Indians.

The Jibaros regard not only rapids and cataracts in the rivers, but also the high waterfalls or cascades in the cordilleras as haunting-places of certain spirits, called *iguanchi*. These demons are in their nature ancestral souls. When the Jibaro Indian takes tobacco or some other narcotic medicine for the purpose of dreaming, he usually retires to the forest, because there he expects more easily to enter into communication with the forest demons who will meet him in narcotic sleep. But these spirits are also present in the cascades in the forest. Hence, while the Indian is taking his tobacco-water in repeated doses, he stands in the cascade allowing the water to fall on his naked shoulders. The water, it is believed, will promote sleep and bring the Indian into communication with the spirits. The Quichua-speaking Canelos Indians, who are closely related to the Jibaros, call the spirits of the waterfalls *sacha supai* (" demons of the wood "). These instances not only illustrate the Indian ideas of water spirits, but also show that the magical power which Indian superstition ascribes to natural water may have a purely animistic origin.

---

[1] Karsten, *Religion of the Jibaro Indians of Eastern Ecuador* (*Boletin de Academia Nacional de Historia*, vol. iv., nums. 10 y 11), p. 15.

[2] Karsten, *The Toba Indians of the Bolivian Gran Chaco* (*Acta Academiæ Aboënsis.* Humaniora, iv.), p. 41.

It must, moreover, be pointed out that many of the spirits haunting rivers and lagoons are animal beings of some kind living in water, as we have seen in the chapter on the animal spirits. Thus, the most formidable demon in the River Amazon and its tributaries is the great water serpent, in western Amazonas best known under the name *yacu mama* (" Water Mother "), or *yacu supai* (" the water demon "). Other water demons of the same kind are the great cayman or alligator, the fresh-water dolphin, and the dangerous ray, superstitiously feared by the Indians.

The mysterious lagoons up on the mountains have since olden times been worshipped by the half-civilized Indians of Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia. Their enormous depth, their black and icy-cold water, and certain other strange phenomena connected with them, have struck the imagination of the natives and suggested to their mind that these lagoons are inhabited by powerful spirits. I have found this idea prevailing among the primitive Colorados also, who inhabit the virgin forests west of the Ecuadorian Andes. The Indians assert that the water in some of the mountain lagoons rises and falls with the water in the sea; and sometimes, they say, it bubbles as if it were boiling. The man who bathed in such a lagoon would certainly fall ill. These lagoons are therefore by the Colorados called " angry lagoons " (*papu mudúh*), and the *jukang* (evil spirits) inhabiting them are believed to be spirits of malicious sorcerers. Hence the medicine-men, when curing disease, invoke these demons in their incantations.

Of greater interest, however, is the worship of the sea and of the springs in those parts of Peru where the Inca empire had its main centre. The endless powerful ocean, bathing the long coasts of Peru and attracting attention through its movements, and particularly through its regular tide, to the Peruvian mind became not only a living personal being, but the symbol of omnipotence. The sea as the " Mother of the waters " was called Mamacocha; as a Creator of all things it was worshipped under the name of Viracocha.[1] But the power and influence ascribed to the sea-deity appears in part to have been due to the fact that, as a mother of the waters, she was particularly regarded as a mother of the springs. In fact, the springs are called " daughters of the sea," and when directing sacrifices and prayers to them, the Peruvians at first addressed Viracocha, the Creator. Again, as to the springs, it is easy to understand that in arid regions like western Peru, where rain is scarce and in some parts entirely lacking during the whole year, ever-flowing waters should have an enormous importance for the irrigation of the soil. Only from this point of view can the fervent worship of springs in ancient Peru be satisfactorily explained. What the Indians expected of those water deities was clearly expressed in the prayers which accompanied the sacrifices to them.

We have now to pay attention to the worship of heavenly bodies in South America. Among the deities which the Peruvians termed achachilas there were, moreover, the sun, the moon, and the stars, meteorological phenomena like thunder and lightning, the rainbow, and the clouds. Of special interest is the sun, which, as we know, was one of the principal deities of the Incas. It is important, however, to notice what Bandelier states about the sun-worship of the ancient Peruvians. " Sun-worship, so-called," he says, " was by no means general, but limited to the Inca of Cuzco. Neither did they look upon the sun as *the* supreme god; it was one of the fetishes most applied to, but not for everything." The same writer points out that the Incas did not, as often alleged, "enforce" sun-worship wherever they extended their sway; they merely added to already existing shrines of great importance places of worship dedicated to their own tribal cult.[1] In making this observation Bandelier is no doubt right in so far that the Incas of Cuzco believed themselves to stand in a specially intimate relation to the deity who manifested its power in the sun, regarding him as their "Father." On the other hand, it would certainly be an exaggeration to assume that sun-worship in any form has been totally unknown to Andean mountain culture, except where it has been introduced by the Incas. The traces of a sun-worship which are found, for instance, among the Quichua-speaking peoples of Ecuador,[2] who were of an altogether different race from the Peruvians, need not necessarily be set down to Inca influence, although it is, of course, difficult to decide how far the Inca rulers succeeded in propagating their own tribal cult among the nations to whom they extended their sway. In any case, it must be pointed out that the worship or veneration paid to the sun in the mountain regions of western South America was not essentially the outcome of deliberate invention or enforced propagation, but had, as it were, a natural foundation. The sun was one of those heavenly powers who had too great an influence upon the welfare of the Indians to be neglected. This becomes perfectly clear from the words which accompanied the sacrifices made to the sun-god. Phrases again and again repeated in the prayers addressed to him were that he may always remain young and rise every day illuminating the earth, that he may give warmth in order that the fruits may grow, etc., just as the thunder-god was besought to send rain and fertilize the plantations.

---

[1] The etymology of this word is uncertain. The Quichua word *cocha* (*cucha*) means " sea," " lagoon "; the word *vira* " grease " or " fat," or, as an adjective, " fat," " big." *Viracocha*, therefore, may possibly be translated into " foam of the sea," or perhaps " the big sea " (*Cp.* Sarmiento de Gamboa, *History of the Incas* [Hakluyt Society], p. 36). Garcilasso de la Vega (*op cit.*, bk. ii., c. 66) rejects this etymology, but since it is a literal translation, and he cannot himself offer any theory as to the meaning of the word, we need not ascribe much importance to his diverging opinion. It is an interesting fact that the Spaniards, when they first arrived in Peru, were by the Indians called *Viracucha*. The same name is still given a white man by the Quichua-speaking Indians in Ecuador, and I myself have been called so by these natives. As we know, the Spaniards were at first looked upon as supernatural beings by the Indians of Peru, and, since they had come over the sea, they were naturally associated with the sea-god, and called by this name.

The Peruvian Creator-god *Viracocha* offers a complicated problem, and I do not propose to solve it here. What I have wished to point out at present is that, as it seems to me, *Viracocha* was, among other things, connected with the sea. In Peruvian legends he is described as a cultural hero endowed with supernatural faculties, who rose from the lake Titicaca, and to whom two successive creations were attributed. Having finished the second, he went to sea and disappeared there. See Betanzos, *Suma y Narración de los Incas*, c. 1, p. 1 *sqq.* Cieza de León, *Segunda parte de la cronica del Perú*, c. 5, p. 5. Sarmiento de Gamboa, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-36. Bandelier, *op. cit.*, p. 299.

As to the sun-worship of the Cuzco tribes, we know that its proper centre was the lake Titicaca, or more strictly speaking, the eponymic island in that big water basin. Moreover, it appears that the object of particular worship on the island in ancient times was the sacred rock *Titicaca,* from which the whole island took its name; *Titicaca,* it should be noticed, literally means "the rock of the wild-cat."[1] But the worship of the sacred rock is further said to have been due to some connection of the rock with the *sun*, and later the sun seems to have become the deity to which the main adoration was directed. Bandelier, who states this as a result of his careful scrutiny of certain rare literary sources on ancient Peru, adds that even to-day Titicaca is often called the "Island of the Sun," just as Koati, its smaller neighbour, is called the "Island of the Moon." The temple of the sun stood close by the sacred rock, and with it other chapels, dedicated to thunder and lightning. Nevertheless, Bandelier emphasizes *that the rock*, and *not* the sun, *was the principal fetish of the island.*[2] It seems probable that the worship of the sacred rock on the island of Titicaca was one of those numerous achachila cults of the Aymará which have been examined before in connection with the worship of mountains, rocks, etc., and upon which the Incas superimposed their own national cult when in the latter part of the fifteenth century they took possession of the island. Yet it appears that, even before the Inca invasion, the sacred rock, and the whole island, was in some way connected with the sun. How this happened is told us in an Aymará legend narrated by Cieza de León and Father Cobo. The beginning of Cieza's narration, where the tale about this remarkable incident is mentioned, runs as follows: "Before the Incas ruled in these kingdoms and were known in them, the Indians affirm that for a long time they were without seeing the sun, and that suffering a great deal on that account, they prayed and made vows to those on whom they looked as their gods, begging them for the light of which they were deprived. And while this was going on, the sun rose in great splendour from the island of Titicaca, which is within this great lagoon of the Collao, so that all were delighted."[3] The same legend is related by Father Cobo, and from his more detailed account it appears that the particular object associated with the sun was the sacred rock, since it was from the latter that, after the dispersion of the great fog, the sun rose. "One morning," Cobo tells us, "the inhabitants of the said island of Titicaca saw the sun rise from that rock in extraordinary splendour, on account of which they believed that rock to be the real house or dwelling-place of Sun, or the thing best suited to his taste in the world. Therefore they dedicated the rock to him, and erected a sumptuous temple there."[1] That the legend refers to an intensive and obstinate fog is expressly indicated by Cobo; and it is easy to understand that both the wonderful rock, from which the sun was supposed to have risen, and the whole island, should thenceforward be dedicated to the sun-god. Similarly, among the huacas in the neighbourhood of Cuzco, there were some stone pillars, rocks, and hills, which in one way or another had been associated with the sun and regarded as sacred.

---

[1] Bandelier, *op. cit.*, p. 277.

[2] Among many peoples in central and southern Ecuador Cieza de León found sun-worship prevailing (see *Cronica del Perú* [Primera parte], for instance cc. 43, 49, 50, etc.), but, as he says himself, he did not know whether they had borrowed this custom from the Incas or whether it was aboriginal among them.

---

[1] Bandelier, *op. cit.*, p. 47. The reason why this name was given to the island is assigned by Father Ramos. "Fingen estos Indios que en tiempos pasados se vió un gato en la peña con gran resplandor, y que de ordinario la paseaba. De aqui tomaron motivo para decir que era peña donde el Sol tenia sus palacios, y asi fue el mayor y mas solene adoratorio que tubo el Reyno dedicado a esta Planeta" (Ramos Gavilán, *op. cit.*, p. 65).

[2] Bandelier, *op. cit.*, p. 237.

[3] Cieza de León, *Segunda parte de la cronica del Perú*, c. 5, p. 5. In the First Part of Cieza's Chronicle the same incident is also shortly mentioned, *Cronica del Perú* (Primera parte), c. 103.

As regards the nature of the sun-god, we may ask whether the sun was worshipped as such—*i.e.*, as a heavenly body—or whether it was looked on as the abode of a *spirit*. On this point Bandelier makes another important statement: "It was not the orbs (sun and moon) to which a certain worship was offered, but *to the spiritual beings that dwelt in them*, to the Achachilas or Pacarinas believed to reside both in the sun and the moon."[2] From this we may conclude that the sun-deity and the moon-deity belonged to the same category of ancestral spirits as the spirits inhabiting other inanimate natural objects. There are, moreover, indications that the sun was looked upon as *father* and the moon as *mother*, one being the husband and the other the wife. When the Incas called the sun their "Father" from whom they were descended,[3] when the dying Inca said that he was going to join "his Father the Sun," who called his son to rest with himself in the other life,[4] this was certainly not merely a metaphor or a figure of speech. Garcilasso de la Vega states that "what helped to establish them [the Indians] in the faith that the Incas were really children of the sun, was the fact that many of them had similar legends about their own birth, although they were not equally noble as the Incas. Judging of the descent of the Inca from their own, they regarded him as a veritable progeny of the sun, and adored him as such, promising to obey his orders. They believed him to be a divine man who had been sent from the heaven."[1] We have no reason to disbelieve Garcilasso on this point, so much the less as his statement is perfectly confirmed by what we know from other sources about the cult which was paid to the sun-deity and the Inca ruler alike. I shall find an opportunity to deal with this cult in the subsequent chapter.

---

[1] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 55. The same legend is referred to by Father Ramos, who, moreover, relates how the sacred island, with its rock dedicated to the sun, was made known to Inca Tupac Yupanqui by an old Indian (Ramos Gavilán, *op. cit.*, pp. 17, 98).

[2] Bandelier, *op. cit.*, note 97, p. 150. See also p. 277.

[3] Garcilasso de la Vega, *op. cit.*, bk. i., c. 15.

[4] Garcilasso de la Vega, *op. cit.*, bk. viii,, c. 8.

It may be added that the sun-deity did not everywhere in Peru enjoy the same respect as at Cuzco. In some parts of the country his place was secondary in relation to that occupied by other heavenly powers. Thus Professor Seler, quoting an ancient chronicler from the seventeenth century, Father Antonio de Calancha, states that the inhabitants of the valley north of Trujillo " worshipped the moon as their principal deity; for he has the power over the elements, produces the aliments, and is the cause of the movements of the sea, of the lightning, and of the thunder." They had a huaca called Si-an (" the house of the moon "), where they adored the moon. They held the moon to be more potent than the sun, " because the sun only shines in the day, whereas the moon is visible both day and night, and because the moon sometimes causes eclipses of the sun, whereas the sun never causes eclipses of the moon." Together with the moon they worshipped the Pleiades, because this constellation gave them aliments and made the plantations grow. For the same reason they count the beginning of the year from the appearance of the Pleiades.[2]

East of the Andes there are but few traces to be found of a sun-worship. Where a sun-deity enters into the creed of the Indians, he rather forms part of their mythology than of their religion. It is natural that in the hot tropical virgin forests the sun should have less importance as a dispenser of warmth and fertility than in the cold mountain regions. In a hot climate the sun may be regarded rather as a malevolent than as a beneficent being. A mythical personification of the sun and the moon, however, is known to many tribes, and no doubt without influence from the higher Indian culture in the west. The Jibaros in Ecuador, for instance, believe that both the sun and the moon and the stars have anciently been " people " (Jibaros), who lived on the earth. Various myths are current about them and their ascension to the heavens, but no worship is paid to them.[1] A vague personification of the sun and the moon is encountered among many Chaco tribes—for instance, among the Tobas,[2] the Matacos,[3] and the Lenguas[4]—but on the whole the heavenly bodies have little importance even from a purely mythological point of view. More definite are the ideas held by the Onas. Sr. Gallardo states that " they like the sun simply because formerly it was a great man, and because for the time being it spends light and warmth."[5] The sun, as also the moon and the stars, are looked upon with great respect, and even with fear. Of the stars they assert that they are departed men, and some stars are even men who live still.[6] It is natural that in a cold country like Tierra del Fuego the sun should particularly attract the attention of the savage Indian, and be respected as a beneficent power. In the tropical parts of South America similar ideas are probably rare. However, of the Bororó Indians in Matto Grosso a writer states that " they consider the sun as the fountain-head of majesty and power, and even of beneficence, and as the abode of the great priests who have passed to the spirit world and fear him."[7] The latter is evidently a common Indian belief of the heavenly bodies in general. Thus, a Boro Indian, in north-west Amazonas, explained to Mr. Whiffen that the stars were " the souls of the chiefs and of the great men of his tribe."[8] Similarly, in the Guiana myths the sun, the moon, and the stars often not only figure as personified beings, but are in some cases expressly stated to have a human origin. The sun with its crown of rays is described as an Indian with a head ornament of silver and parrot feathers, ear-pendants of brilliant beetle wings,[9] etc. The moon formerly lived on the earth as an evil sorcerer,[1] and of the stars legends are current which indicate that these heavenly bodies are intimately associated with the departed. Thus, for instance, the Milky Way is supposed to be the path along which the souls of the departed wander to the Shade-land,[2] a belief which is found in other parts of South America also. Thus, Mr. Grubb states that the Lenguas regard the Milky Way as "the path of the *kilyikhama*" (evil spirits).[3] The Moluches, according to Falkner, say that "the stars are old Indians," and that "the Milky Way is the field where the old Indians hunt ostriches."[4] The Pleiades, which play an important part in the calendar of many primitive peoples, sowing and planting being often determined by observation of this constellation, have attracted the attention of many South American savages. The Abipones of Paraguay, for instance, regarded the Pleiades as an image of their ancestor. As the constellation is invisible in the sky of South America for several months every year, the Abipones believed that their ancestor was then sick, and they were dreadfully afraid that he would die. But when the constellation reappeared in the month of May, they saluted the return of their ancestor with joyous shouts and the glad music of flutes and horns, and they congratulated him on his recovery from sickness. Next day they all went out to collect wild honey, from which they brewed a favourite beverage. Then at sunset they feasted and kept up the revelry all night by the light of torches, while a sorceress, who presided at the festivity, shook her rattle and danced.[5] The ceremonies thus described by Father Dobrizhoffer with special reference to the Abipones are typical of the veneration paid to the moon and the stars by some South American tribes.[6]

---

[1] Garcilasso de la Vega, *op. cit.*, bk. i., c. 21.

[2] Seler, " Viaje arqueologico en Peru y Bolivia," in *Inca, Revista trimensal de estudios antropologicos*, vol. ii., No. 2, 1923, p. 372.

---

[1] Karsten, *Mitos de los indios Jibaros* (*Shuara*) (*Boletin de la Sociedad Ecuatoriana de estudios historicos Americanos*, No. 6, vol. ii., 1919), p. 353 *sqq.*

[2] Lehmann-Nitsche, *La astronomia de los Tobas* (*Revista del Museo de la Plata*, vol. xxvii.), p. 269 *sqq.*

[3] Lehmann-Nitsche, *La astronomia de los Matacos* (*op. cit.*), p. 255 *sqq.* It may, however, be observed that superstitious practices at the eclipses of the sun and the moon, of the kind which are in vogue among the Matacos and most South American tribes, are no evidence of a deification and cult of these heavenly bodies as such. The said practices are merely prompted by the desire to frighten away the evil spirit which, in native belief, is attacking the sun or the moon and eclipsing it.

[4] Grubb, *An Unknown People in an Unknown Land*, p. 139.

[5] Gallardo, *op. cit.*, p. 338.

[6] Gallardo, *op. cit.*, p. 326.

[7] Cook, *The Bororó Indians of Matto Grosso*, p. 55.

[8] Whiffen, *North-West Amazonas*, p. 234.

[9] Koch-Grünberg, *Vom Roroima zum Orinoco*, Bd. II., *Mythen und Legenden der Taulipang- und Arekuna-Indianer*, p. 11.

As we have seen, it is in many cases expressly stated that the spirits inhabiting the heavenly bodies are regarded as Indian ancestors, or, in general, as departed men of the tribe. This is perfectly natural, considering that according to Indian belief the disembodied souls of the dead not only take up their abodes in different natural objects on earth, but also rise upwards to the sky. Dr. Roth, dealing with the ideas of the Guiana Indians, states that " the spirits of people departed may wander upward to join other spirits in Sky-land. Some of them may pass their existence happily, and harm no one, or in the course of their transformation they may become changed into birds—perhaps into birds of ill-omen—and so have their place in the heavens. Again, the spirits of good medicine-men travel upward to Cloud-land, and may be invoked by their surviving professional brethren with the aid of the rattle and tobacco."[1] This statement no doubt holds true of all South American Indians. But just as disembodied human souls often take up their abode in heavenly bodies, so they are also believed to act in striking meteorological phenomena, such as thunder and lightning, the rainbow, comets, and meteors. Among the Incas of Cuzco, as we know, the huaca or idol of thunder and lightning enjoyed worship at the side of the idol of the sun and of the moon; all three of them were looked upon as achachilas or pacarinas—*i.e.*, as ancestors. The importance of the god of thunder and lightning, as Father Molina states, was due to the observation of the Peruvians that when it thunders and lightens it generally also rains; the thunder-god therefore fertilized their fields and gave them food.[2] Among the primitive Indians east of the Andes, the spirit of thunder and lightning has nowhere developed into an anthropomorphic deity of the same kind as the Illapa of the Incas. We can also understand that in the humid virgin forests rain is not of the same extraordinary importance for agriculture as in the arid mountain regions in the west. But it is natural that stupendous phenomena such as thunder and lightning should always attract the attention of the savage Indian, and give rise to superstitious beliefs and practices. As a matter of fact, the idea that thunderstorms, as also hurricanes and similar phenomena, are caused by evil spirits who are moving about in the air, is encountered in all parts of South America. That tempests are caused by the spirits of the dead is, for instance, the belief of the Araucanians in Chile. Not a storm bursts upon the Andes or the ocean which these Indians do not ascribe to a battle between the souls of their fellow-countrymen and those of the Spaniards. In the roar of the wind they hear the trampling of the ghostly horses, in the peal of thunder the roll of the drums, and in the flashes of lightning the fire of the artillery.[3]

---

[1] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

[2] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

[3] Grubb, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

[4] Falkner, *Description of Patagonia*, p. 115.

[5] Dobrizhoffer, *Geschichte der Abiponer*, ii. 88 *sq.*

[6] With much the same ceremonies, according to Sr. Pelleschi, the moon and certain stars are worshipped among the Matacos (*Otto mesi nel Gran Ciacco*, p. 118).

---

[1] Roth, *op. cit.*, p. 266.

[2] de Molina, *Relación de las fabulas y ritos de los Ingas* (*op. cit.*), p. 27.

[3] Molina, *Geographical, Natural, and Civil History of Chili*, ii. 92.

Behind the civilized terminology we easily detect a primitive idea about the cause of thunder and lightning, which, as we shall presently see, prevails among several tribes in South America. The Conibos of the Ucayali in eastern Peru, we are told, imagine that thunder is the voice of the dead.[1] Among the same Indians, when parents, who have lost a child, within three months hear thunder, they go and dance on the grave, howling in turn.[2] They no doubt fancy that their lost child is groaning in the rumble of thunder.

The Chorotis in the Gran Chaco believe that thunder and the flash of lightning are caused by a great number of *mohsek* (evil spirits), who are rushing through the air and making their onset upon the village. Every time that a burst of thunder is heard, the Indians, sitting in their huts, start to shout and scream loudly, in order to frighten away the molesting supernatural visitors. The *mohsek* seem to be of human origin, being regarded as old men of the tribe, skilled in the magic art. Exactly the same belief I have found among the Tobas, who call the demons of thunder and lightning *peyak.* The ancient Abipones, who belonged to the same group as the Tobas, seem to have shared their superstition about striking meteorological phenomena. Father Dobrizhoffer on this point observes that " whenever they see a fiery meteor, or hear it thunder three or four times, these simpletons believe that one of their jugglers is dead, and that this thunder and lightning are his funeral obsequies."[3] Mr. Grubb, quoting this statement of Dobrizhoffer's, adds for his own part that the Lenguas of the present day have the same belief.[4] Similarly, the Onas explain the distant rumbling of thunder as a sign of the anger of their dead sorcerers, who, they fear, will send them plague and wars.[5]

The beliefs prevailing among the Indians of the Amazonian territory about thunder, lightning, meteors, and similar phenomena, appear in a typical way from the following instances relating to the tribes of eastern Ecuador. The Quichua-speaking Napo Indians fancy that in thunder, lightning, as well as in the rainbow, demons (*supai*) are acting, who are in their nature evil sorcerers. If lightning kills an Indian, it was in reality a sorcerer who killed him. When a thunderbolt falls into the river, the Indians say, " Now the *supai* of lightning killed the *amárun*." *Amárun* is the great anaconda or water serpent, which is himself regarded as an incarnation of an evil spirit. Repeated flashes of lightning are sometimes explained as due to the attacks of hostile savage Indians, called Aucas, or they indicate that the Aucas are fighting with the whites. Similarly, the wild Jibaros believe that thunder is caused by a great number of *shuāra* (enemies)—*i.e.*, spirits of departed Jibaro warriors—who, under such noise, are making an assault on the Indians. During violent thunderstorms, therefore, the Jibaro men are seen brandishing their lances against the sky, making springs, shouting and challenging their invisible supernatural assailers with the same words that they use to defy their natural enemies: *Winiti, winiti, pahei* ("Come on, I am ready!"). The Jibaros consequently call thunder *shuāra ipyámwui*—that is, "the enemies are fighting." Lightning is supposed to be an old Jibaro warrior, one of those ancestors of the Jibaro race which are called *Arútama*, and which appear to the Indian when narcotized by tobacco or *natéma* (a narcotic drink prepared of a poisonous vine). Among the same powerful demons some other striking heavenly phenomena are reckoned—namely, the rainbow (*tundyáka*), and comets or meteors, called *payára* ("a falling thing").[1] Again, the Canelos Indians, who are related to the Jibaros, have certain superstitions about the rainbow, which in part occur among the half-civilized mountain Indians also, and in part are peculiar to the primitive tribes east of the Andes. The rainbow is an evil spirit, the appearance of which is looked upon as a bad omen. He is particularly dangerous to young women, since he may make them supernaturally pregnant. To the Peruvians the rainbow (*kurmi*) was an achachila ("ancestor"); the Canelos Indians and some other tribes in eastern Ecuador fancy that he is nothing but a huge anaconda in the air, or, as they generally express it, the rainbow is the "shadow of the anaconda (*amárun*)." Since the monstrous water serpent is believed to be the reincarnation of the spirit of an evil wizard, it follows that the rainbow also is greatly feared, especially by women. When the rainbow appears, a woman who is in her menstrual period ought not to go out lest the *cuichi supai* (rainbow demon) should make her pregnant, in which case she will give birth to a demoniacal child (*supai huahua*).[2] It seems probable that the Canelos Indians have borrowed this particular superstition from the mountain Indians. On the other hand, the association of the rainbow with the great water serpent seems to be peculiar to the animistic philosophy of the tribes of tropical South America. This we may infer from the fact that the same belief is held, for instance, by the Indians of Guiana and by the Lenguas of Paraguay. Thus, Professor Koch-Grünberg states that in Guiana the rainbow is thought of as being theriomorphic; it is identical with " the great many-coloured water serpent which inhabits the high cataracts."[1] He is of opinion that this belief has originated in the observation that the rainbow often appears in the water damp which is formed above the cataracts.[2] But the most natural explanation is no doubt that the iris, through its very form, strongly recalls the huge water monster, which has impressed the Indian mind more than any other phenomenon of the animal world. Again, of the Lenguas, Mr. Grubb relates that " the rainbow is held by some to be symbolic of some serpent monster. When seen in the west or north-west, the Indian will not handle sharp instruments, such as a knife or axe, for fear of being hurt . . . generally speaking, his idea of rainbow is that it is a sign of calamity."[3]

---

[1] Smyth and Lowe, *Journey from Lima to Para*, p. 240.

[2] de St. Cricq, "Voyage du Pérou au Brésil," in *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie*, vi., Paris, 1853, p. 294.

[3] Dobrizhoffer, *op. cit.*, ii. 75.

[4] Grubb, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

[5] Gallardo, *op. cit.*, pp. 319, 343.

---

[1] Karsten, *Religion of the Jibaro Indians* (*op. cit.*), pp. 10, 11.

[2] Karsten, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

The Indians in the region of the River Yapurá in north-west Amazonas believe that before a thunderstorm the air is " full of spirits," and the medicine-man is requested to clear the atmosphere. " Thunder is the noise of evil spirits making a turmoil and fuss."[4] The Uaupés Indians say that when it thunders Yurupary, the evil demon, is angry.[5] The Yuracáres in the interior of Bolivia threaten the thunder-god with their arrows and defy him when he thunders[6]—a proceeding recalling the analogous practice of the Jibaros. The Guiana Indians ascribe great importance to the rain, the wind, and the lightning for the curing of certain diseases. In the magical incantations, which are closely connected with mythological ideas, they appear personified as speaking and acting, making good the evils which the cultural heroes have caused in their malevolence.[7] Comparing these ideas with those prevailing elsewhere, we may assume that in lightning and other meteorological phenomena spirits of dead medicine-men are supposed to act, who are appealed to by their living colleagues for curative purposes.

The great rôle that the spirits of medicine-men play in Indian

[1] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

[2] Koch-Grünberg, *loc. cit.*

[3] Grubb, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

[4] Whiffen, *op. cit.*, p. 229.

[5] Wallace, *A Narrative of Travels on the Amazon and Rio Negro*, p. 500.

[6] d'Orbigny, *L'homme américain*, i. 365.

[7] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, p. 14 *sq.*

animism also appears from the following statement relating to the Bororó of the River Xingú. Professor von den Steinen relates that one day during his stay among them a splendid meteor fell, spreading dismay through the Indian village. It was believed to be the soul of a dead medicine-man, who suddenly appeared in this form to announce that he wanted meat, and that, as a preliminary measure, he wanted to visit somebody with an attack of dysentery.[1]

The above survey of the animistic beliefs of the South American Indians, although by no means complete, gives us an intimation about the nature of the spiritual beings which are supposed to inhabit inanimate objects and to act in striking phenomena. But before I proceed to summarize the conclusion which we may be entitled to draw from the facts adduced, it is necessary to seek an answer to the other question with which I proposed to deal in this chapter—namely, how far the magic power of certain "fetishes," obtained from the mineral kingdom, is connected with the said animistic beliefs.

Fetishes, amulets, and talismans consisting of stones of one kind or another are extremely common in all parts of South America. Various superstitious practices of the Indians could be mentioned which seem to indicate that stones are in themselves believed to possess mysterious power and to expel or intimidate evil spirits. A typical instance of this may be adduced with reference to the Canelos Indians of Ecuador. When a man is stung by a venomous snake, he is cured by the medicine-man with the usual incantations, as well as with tobacco and other medicines. On the fifth day, independent of whether the patient has recovered or is about to die, the following ceremony takes place. Five round or somewhat oblate stones are looked for on the banks of the river and arranged in a row from the house outwards, with a distance of about one foot between each stone. Thereupon the medicine-man, either alone or with the assistance of another Indian, makes the patient slowly walk along these stones, passing from the house outwards and back. By this procedure, it is believed, he will be cured from the consequences of the snake-bite. The cure, of course, is due to some magical virtues ascribed to the stones, but the Indians cannot explain more closely how the natural stones, apparently chosen at random on the river-bank, have such marvellous effects. Similarly it is evident that the stones thrown at the apachitas or sacred cairns in Peru are supposed to have the power of keeping off the evil spirits inhabiting these places. That the hard stones, which serve primitive savages as weapons and implements, should also be used by them to intimidate supernatural foes, is not difficult to understand; but if a special spiritual force is ascribed to the stones, it is, in such instances as those just mentioned, difficult to account for its origin.

---

[1] v. d. Steinen, *Unter den Indianern Central-Brasiliens*, p. 514 *sq*. Again, of the Lengua Indians in Paraguay we are told that they also stand in great fear of meteors, but imagine them to be "stones hurled from heaven at the wicked sorcerers who have done people to death by their charms" (Grubb, *op. cit.*, p. 163; Kurze, "Sitten and Gebräuche der Lengua-Indianer," in *Mittheil. der Geograph. Gesellsch. zu Jena*, xxiii., 1905, p. 17).

In other cases, however, it is different. When a stone is credited with mysterious power and raised to the rank of a fetish, this is usually due to some peculiarity in its shape, position, size, colour, etc., or to remarkable coincidences of some kind, which make it appear to the primitive mind in a supernatural light. Whether the power with which it is invested is conceived as personal or impersonal is a question that does not concern us at present. What I propose to show is that, even if the stone fetish is not thought to be actually inhabited by a spirit, the power which it possesses is still *derived* from a spirit or soul with which it is, or has been, in some way connected; and that consequently an "animatistic" interpretation[1]—if by "animatism" we mean a pre-animistic notion in the strict sense—must be rejected.

Generally the stone fetishes are alleged to have some mysterious origin. Very often, for instance, they consist of old-time objects found by the natives when digging in the soil, as stone implements, stone axes, strangely shaped masses of stone, some rudely chipped, some polished, pieces of earthenware pots, etc. The Indians ascribe these objects to their mythical ancestors or to an early race of men who have once inhabited that place and possessed the soil, and whose spirits still dwell there, jealously keeping watch over their property. Archæologists, working in South America, have often had great difficulty in overcoming the superstitious fear with which the native co-operators at the excavations have regarded such objects and the places where they are found. To dig in old ruins and burial-places is extremely risky, because the person doing so is likely to incur the anger of the mysterious beings who once have lived there.

---

[1] See Marett, *The Threshold of Religion*, p. 19 *sq.*, where an attempt is made to show that in regard to stone-worship also, an animatistic conception had preceded animism proper.

Sickness and death or misfortune may be the consequence of such a sacrilege. Thus, Bandelier states that certain ceremonies, by which the achachilas of the place were propitiated, had always to be performed previously to excavations for antiquities, and that without such a worship no work of that kind was expected to be successful.[1] Similarly, Dr. Nordenskiöld relates, with reference to the Itonamas of Bolivia, that, according to their belief, old fields and settlements were inhabited by *chokihua—i.e.,* dead Itonamas, whose anger was provoked by anybody digging in the fields and touching the ancient objects found there.[2]

But although such old-time objects are thus generally shunned owing to the dangerous taboo attaching to them, the mysterious power with which they are endowed may, on the other hand, be used for positive ends. If handled with due caution, or by the right person, they may be changed into charms or amulets which cure disease and bring luck. The magical force contained in these fetishes, whether harmful or benign in its effects, is due to their connection with the spirits of those ancient people who have once possessed them and who are buried in the place whence they are obtained. Thus, for instance, a kind of antiquity in Peru and Bolivia is known under the name *chulpa.* This word, borrowed from the Aymará language, originally signified the bag or sack made of *ichu* grass of the mountain regions, in which the dead were placed. From the bag or sack the name was gradually transferred, popularly, to the buildings in which they were found, and finally to the people who once occupied them.[3] The Quichuas and Aymará of the present day, by the word *chulpa* usually mean the spirits of the dead buried in the small buildings or in caves.[4] It is considered dangerous to come into contact with the *chulpa,* because the spirit may invade the person doing so, and make him fall ill or die. But the *chulpa* graves may also be used to cure people from sickness, or for other purposes. Ischiadic passion, for instance, is cured by rubbing the leg with burned *chulpa* bones. Of pieces of bronze found in the *chulpas* angling-hooks should be made; and, by using them, luck in fishing is secured. Stone axes taken from the same burial-places will protect against sickness caused by the disease-bringing wind, when the face is rubbed with them.[1] Dr. Nordenskiöld, from whom this statement is borrowed, adds that the mountain Indians also are in the habit of grinding pieces of old pottery found in the *chulpas* into powder and mixing this powder into the clay of which new pots are made.[2] It is not probable that the Indians do this merely with a view to rendering the material harder. The clay pots themselves are believed to possess magical power, and mysterious properties are generally ascribed to the clay used in their fabrication. Dr. Nordenskiöld elsewhere mentions that at Boturo in western Bolivia the pots were made of *earth taken from a great sepulchre* near the village. The earth, before it was used for the fabrication of the clay vessels, was ground in big stone mortars.[3] My explanation is that the earth was taken from a sepulchre, because such an earth, imbued with spiritual power, possessed the mysterious properties which the Indians considered necessary for the manufacture of their pottery.

---

[1] Bandelier, *op. cit.,* p. 96 *sqq.*

[2] Nordenskiöld, *Forskningar och äventyr i Sydamerika,* p. 311. Idem, *Arkeologiska undersökningar i Perus och Bolivias gränstrakter* (*Kungl. Svenska Vetenskapsakademins Handlingar,* Bd. XLII., No. 2), pp. 9, 10, 42, 52, etc.

[3] Bandelier, *op. cit.,* p. 165: part iv., note 1 (p. 241).

[4] Nordenskiöld, *Arkeologiska undersökningar i Perus och Bolivias gränstrakter* (*op. cit.*), p. 35.

Mountains and rocks, as we have seen, are believed to be animated by human spirits. Peculiar-shaped rocks, stone pillars, etc., are frequently regarded as men transformed into stone. We have also seen that such rocks and stone masses—for instance, in Guiana—are objects of great fear on the part of the natives, as also the products of petroglyphy, often found on these rocks. Evil influences are believed to emanate from these mountain spirits, and it is especially considered necessary to take care of the eyes.[4] But this negative magic, if so we may call it, has its counterpart in a magic of a more positive kind. There is no doubt that mountains, regarded as seats of powerful spirits, are prolific sources of all sorts of luck-bringing fetishes, although this is difficult to show in detail. Crystals, gems, and other coloured stones, obtained from sacred mountains and caves, pieces of stone broken off from sacred pillars, may become propitious charms and amulets. To make a clear distinction between animism and fetishism on this point is not always possible.[5] Thus, of some of the Peruvian huacas, it is difficult to say whether they are to be termed animated objects in general or real fetishes. One of the principal huacas, as mentioned before, was the one situated on the hill Huanacauri. It consisted of a stone into which, according to an Indian legend, a brother of the first Inca had been transformed. Cobo describes the stone as being " middle-sized, without figure, and somewhat worn by use." This stone, which was worshipped with sacrifices, was regarded as a fetish of high rank, and the Peruvians frequently carried it with them on their war expeditions, especially when the Inca personally marched out. Thus, Huayna Capac took it with him on his famous expedition to Quito, and his victories were to a great extent attributed to this fetish.[1] The marvellous power of the stone, of course, was due to its connection with a human spirit, the spirit of an Inca, and since the Inca reys were great heroes of war, the propitious effects of the fetish particularly showed themselves in war.

---

[1] Nordenskiöld, *Forskningar och äventyr i Sydamerika*, p. 115.

[2] Nordenskiöld, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

[3] Nordenskiöld, *Arkeologiska forskningar i Perus och Bolivias gränstrakter* (*op. cit.*), p. 56 *sq.*

[4] See *supra*, p. 258 *sq.* Cp. Roth, *op. cit.*, pp. 239, 300.

[5] The difference between animism and fetishism may be said to consist in that, as Dr. Haddon puts it, "animism sees all things animated by spirits," while "fetishism sees a spirit incorporated in an individual object." Dr. Haddon goes on to state that "the spirit which is believed to occupy the fetish is a different conception from the spirit of the animistic theory; it is not the soul or vital power

Mountain crystals, precious stones, and other stones of unusual colour or shape are among the commonest charms in South America. Wonderful power is generally ascribed to them, and they belong to the special property of the medicine-men and the sorcerers. It seems to me beyond doubt that the magical virtues of such stones are intimately connected with the widespread belief in mountain spirits which, as shown before, are often disembodied souls of medicine-men. The idea prevailing among the primitive Huichols of Mexico is characteristic on this point. They say that the mountain crystals are mysterious persons, dead or living, and that the sorcerers, after having made them pass through the air, have crystallized them. They call these crystals ancestors, and believe that they will give them good luck in hunting. Their ambition is therefore to possess as great a number of them as possible.[2] Among the different tribes

---

belonging to the object, and inherent in it, from which the virtue is derived, but a spirit or power attracted to and incorporated in it, while separable from it" (Haddon, *Magic and Fetishism*, p. 77 *sq.*). However this may be, it is not always possible clearly to distinguish the two conceptions from each other. Equally difficult is it practically to distinguish the fetish from the amulet. By an amulet I understand, in general, a small portable object, often worn as an ornament, which is believed to possess mysterious power by virtue of which it is able to protect against evils and to bring good luck.

[1] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 36.

[2] Lumholtz, *Unknown Mexico*, ii. 197 *sq.* The Tlascaltecs in Central America believed that the souls of people of rank after death entered not only into the bodies of certain higher animals, but also into gems (Clavigero, *Storia antigua del Messico*, ii. 5).

of Ecuador I have myself frequently noticed the extraordinary importance attached to such stones by the medicine-men, who always keep a number of them in their magical bags. The sorcerers of the Napo Indians, for instance, when they throw spells upon their enemies, generally avail themselves of certain stones and other small objects, but crystals are said to be their most formidable weapon. An Indian, when hit by such an " arrow " in the head, is regarded as irremediably lost; no medicine-man is able to cure him. The magical charms of the Colorado medicine-men consist of small black stones which have been thrown out by the volcanoes, especially the Cotopaxi, during eruptions, and which are generally found in certain brooklets. The medicine-men, however, always pretend to have gained possession of them in some mysterious way. The volcano spirits themselves (who are also sorcerers) have revealed them in the dream produced by the narcotic drink *nepe*, the indispensable medicine of the Colorado sorcerer. The origin of the stones accounts for their marvellous power. Just as every sickness is caused by using them as " arrows," so it must be cured by means of the same charms.[1]

Similar charms are used by the medicine-men of the Jibaros in eastern Ecuador. Among these charms, which are known under the name of *namúra*, there are black, red, and white stones; but the last-mentioned, called *kaya wincha* (" brilliant stones "), are considered to be the most powerful. As usual, the medicine-men allege to have obtained them through supernatural revelation: spirits of departed medicine-men have given them in the dream produced by the narcotic *natéma*. In the small white stones there is something of the devil-soul of a sorcerer; hence their effects as " arrows " causing mysterious sickness. But for the same reason they are also used for curative purposes. Without possessing them the " doctor," when about to cure a patient, will not get intoxicated by the *natéma*, and consequently will not have those " good dreams " which reveal to him the origin of the evil.[2] At a certain moment of the treatment, the medicine-man takes out one of the white stones from his magical bag, and after having filled his mouth with tobacco-water, he puts the stone into the mouth, and subsequently rubs the bad spot with it. By this procedure he is supposed favourably to prepare that spot for the extraction of the "arrow."[1] These ideas of the Jibaros are, I believe, typical of the Indian magic in the whole of South America. Thus, among the Indians of Guiana, mountain crystals play an extraordinary rôle in the magic art of the medicine-men. The souls of dead sorcerers (*mauari*) transmigrate into mountains, and there they pass into the very crystals which the medicine-men use at the cure.[2] The magic power of the crystals thus has a purely animistic origin. But the fact that these mysterious stones are intimately associated with the souls of sorcerers also makes us understand why they are so often used as bewitching "arrows."

---

[1] Karsten, "The Colorado Indians of Western Ecuador," in *Ymer*, 1924, Heft II., p. 148.

[2] Karsten, *The Religion of the Jibaro Indians of Eastern Ecuador* (*Boletin de la Academia Nacional de Historia*, vol. iv., nums. 10 y 11), p. 31.

The Jibaros afford one more interesting instance of a stone fetish or amulet in the case of the sacred stone of the Earth-mother Nungüi. This wonderful fetish, which is called *nantára* in the native language, plays an important part in agriculture, and since agriculture is mainly incumbent on the female sex it is the ambition of every married Jibaro woman to procure such a stone. The Jibaro women, who especially use it in planting the manioc to promote the growth of that important root, pretend, however, to have received it in some mysterious way, from the Earth-mother herself, who has revealed it to them in a dream. A Jibaro woman professed to have got the *nantára* in the following way. Once, while she was still a girl, she was given *natéma* to drink. When she was well intoxicated, her grandmother came, seized both her hands, blew upon them and upon her arms, sprinkling juice of tobacco from her own mouth, and said to the girl: "You will not die soon, you will have a long life and have much to eat. The stone which you wear in the hand will effect this." In the same moment there came, as it were, a flash of lightning from the heaven, and the girl heard the voice of the spirit, which said to her: "I am your ancestral mother; I will give you this stone so that you may have a long life." Thereupon the vision passed, and when the hand of the girl was opened in the light of day, a wonderful red stone, *nantára*, was found in it. The *nantára* is regarded as the special symbol of Nungüi, and is said to have blissful effects upon all the domestic works of women, and particularly upon agriculture. It contains something of the soul of the Earth-mother herself, and at the same time the soul of the manioc plant. The stone is therefore supposed to have the power of summoning Nungüi to help at the work of planting, and consequently of making the manioc grow well. The *nantára* is covered with a reversed gourd, and the women sit around it invoking the deity before they proceed to plant the manioc.[1]

---

[1] Karsten, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

[2] Koch-Grünberg, *Vom Roroima zum Orinoco*, Bd. III., *Ethnographie*, pp. 208, 209.

Much the same principles underlie another kind of magical charm in vogue among the Jibaros and the Canelos Indians. These charms consist of small round stones or pebbles, pieces of wood, or other small objects found in the stomachs of certain birds and animals, and are used as hunting charms to attract the game. The small stones are generally taken from the stomachs of birds, especially of the toucan, the powis, and the wild turkey, which are most appreciated as food. As soon as the Indian, having shot a bird and opened its crop, finds such a stone, he carefully washes and dries it, whereupon he puts it into a small round gourd, which is closed with a tap or cover and sealed with wax. The Indian only removes this seal and cover when he is about to start for a hunting expedition. Then he takes out one of the small stones, and, with the powder which has formed itself round it after drying, he paints certain ornamental figures on the face, which figures, of course, become slightly visible upon his skin. Thereafter the stone is again put into the gourd, which is sealed with wax as before. These charms are called *jukka* by the Jibaros, and *misha* by the Canelos Indians, and are believed to have a wonderful power to attract the very birds from the crops of which the stones have been taken.[2] We have here an instance of sympathetic magic, or more strictly speaking, contagious magic, but a magic based on an animistic principle, in so far as the attractive power of the charm is due to the spirit of the bird, which has been communicated to the stone through the contact. Similar hunting charms are in vogue among the Arawaks and Caribs in Guiana, where they are called *bina* (or *toelala* in the Carib language).[3]

With the *misha* of the Canelos Indians and the *bina* of the Arawaks, we may compare the kind of fetishes or amulets in ancient Peru which were called *conopas*, or, in the neighbourhood of Cuzco, *chancas* or *cunchur*. They generally consisted of small stones which had something peculiar in their shape or colour, but sometimes were made of other materials also, and elaborately formed into figures of men, animals, etc. The *conopas* were objects of a real worship, being appealed to for protection against disease, for good luck in agriculture, in childbirth, and so forth.[1]

---

[1] Karsten, *The Religion of the Jibaro Indians* (*op. cit.*), p. 20. Idem, *Contributions to the Sociology of the Indian Tribes of Ecuador* (*Acta Academiæ Aboënsis.* Humaniora, i: 3, 1920), p. 15.

[2] Karsten, *Contributions to the Sociology of the Indian Tribes of Ecuador* (*Acta Academiæ Aboënsis.* Humaniora, i: 3, 1920), p. 39 *sqq.*

[3] Roth, *op. cit.*, p. 281 *sqq.* Penard, *De menschetende Aanbidders der Zonneslang*, i. 177.

That the power ascribed to stone fetishes and amulets has an animistic origin in many other cases also, and especially when they form part of the magical equipment of the medicine-men, is a matter beyond doubt, even if it cannot be strictly shown. Mention may also be made of the small objects, charged with mysterious force, with which the sacred rattle-gourds of the Indians are filled. Dr. Roth, speaking of the famous *marakas* (rattles) of the Guiana Indians, states that their contents are formed either by quartz-crystals or by a species of agate. Seeds may be employed with or without the stones. " But whether seeds or stones," we are told, " they usually have some out-of-the-way origin." The former, for instance, may have been extracted from the *piai* teacher's stomach; the latter may be the gift of the water spirits. According to a Kaliña, the power of the *maraca* lies in the stones contained therein.[2]

In the interior parts of the Gran Chaco stones are extremely rare or almost unobtainable. Some of the natives—for instance, the Chorotis—therefore regard stones and pebbles with superstitious dread, and would never decorate themselves with such things. The reason which they gave me for this aversion was, that an evil spirit, a *mohsek*, dwells in the pebble and infallibly would invade the person who hung it on himself. The explanation was, moreover, added that when a sorcerer bewitches another Indian, he avails himself of a pebble-stone, and when a medicine-man cures the patient, he extracts the disease-demon in the shape of a small stone. This statement is interesting, because it shows that the Chaco Indians, or at least the Chorotis, have the same ideas about witchcraft as are current in the Amazonian territory. Wizards cause sickness by throwing spells embodied in small stones or other material objects. The instance just mentioned also bears out that the Indians make a clear distinction between the material object itself and the indwelling spiritual principle, be that a personal spirit or an impersonal force. From this point of view I fully agree with Dr. Haddon when he observes that " the innate spirituality of the savage appears to be largely ignored by students, who usually dub the magic worker as a conscious cheat and humbug, whereas it seems more correct to regard him as dealing with material objects mainly as endowed with life, or as the vehicles of spiritual or supernatural power."[1]

---

[1] Arriaga, *op. cit.*, p. 14 *sq.* See also Jijón y Caamaño, *op. cit.*, p. 99 *sqq.*

[2] Roth, *op. cit.*, p. 330. See also Barrere, *Nouvelle relation de la France équinoxiale*, p. 208. Goeje, *Beiträge zur Völkerkunde von Surinam* (*Intern. Archiv f. Ethnographie*, Bd. XIX., Heft I.-II.), p. 14.

The idea of the Chorotis that the rare stones may bring disease, because the spirits of evil-working sorcerers are associated with them, may throw some light upon the fact that some precious stones are, both among savage peoples and in modern folklore, regarded as unlucky, as, for example, the precious opal. The magical power of a fetish, as pointed out above, may have not only its positive, but also its negative pole. That *colour* alone has magical qualities we have already seen in connection with the virtues ascribed to the red and black body-painting, and it is certain that in South America many precious stones owe their reputation merely to their striking colours. The most famous coloured stones among the savage Indians are no doubt the green " Amazon-stones " which, as mentioned in a previous chapter,[2] are regarded as prophylactic charms against nervous disorders, fever, and the bites of venomous snakes. These marvellous stones, which are mentioned by several writers, were widely spread not only among the different tribes of the Amazon regions, but also in Guiana, and everywhere seem to have been held in the same superstitious esteem by the natives. The Indians of the Rio Negro, according to von Humboldt, carry them on the neck as amulets;[3] and out on the islands of the coast of Guiana the Caribs wear them strung into necklaces, which are supposed to have a " healing virtue."[4] Dr. Roth was told that these stones were also formerly brought to Demerara in the form of fishes and other animals, as well as with figures cut into the surfaces[5]—a statement which indicates that interesting magical ideas were connected with them. Dr. Roth is no doubt right in pointing out that the talismanic virtues ascribed to these green stones will probably be explained by " the widespread belief in spirits connected with mountains, rocks, stones, etc.,"[6] but exactly to prove this is, of course, difficult.

---

[1] Haddon, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

[2] See *supra*, p. 119.

[3] v. Humboldt, *Reise in die Aequinoctial-Gegenden des neuen Continents*, iii., 392-393.

[4] Roth, *op. cit.*, p. 290.

[5] Roth, *op. cit.*, p. 291.

[6] Roth, *op. cit.*, p. 290. On the Amazon stones, see also Schomburgk, *Reisen in British-Guiana*, ii. 330-332. v. Martius, *Beiträge zur Ethnographie Amerika's*, i. 731 *sq.* Barrere, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

In a mountain at Yacundai, an Indian village not far from Rio Pilcomayo in southern Bolivia, Dr. Nordenskiöld found some interesting sacred caves which were supposed to be haunted by *añas* (spirits of the dead), and the walls of which were " decorated " with figures of snakes, etc. From the roof of one of these caves, the Chiriguano Indians say, blue and green stones (serpentines and turquoises) drop down. They are looked upon with superstition and evidently regarded as amulets. The stones, which are called *itóhue,* are strung into necklaces, and with these both men and women decorate themselves for their great feasts.[1] We may regard it as certain that the magic virtues of these blue and green stones are derived from the mysterious spirits which are believed to haunt the cave.

But spirits of the departed not only dwell in mountains and caves and under the earth, but also rise upwards to the sky, manifesting their existence and power in thunder and lightning, in meteors and similar phenomena. Stones and other objects, which are believed to proceed from these powerful spirits, regularly become fetishes. Thus, it is a well-known fact that meteors are among savage peoples commonly credited with supernatural force. The same may be said of that class of mysterious objects which are known under the name of " lightning-stones," and which generally form part of the private property of the medicine-men. Stone axes and other ancient stone weapons and implements which, through their peculiar form and the primitive material of which they are made, strike the imagination of the savage, are generally supposed to have a similar origin. Superstitions of this kind are encountered in different parts of South America. Thus, the Jibaros by " lightning-stones," understand small round black stones which are said to have been hurled down from heaven by a flash of lightning, or, more strictly speaking, by those departed Jibaro warriors whose spirits are believed to be active in thunder and lightning. The supernatural power with which they are endowed is due to their connection with these spirits. Since they proceed from dead warriors they are especially believed to give success in war. Besides, when kept for a long time they will have the effect of promoting the growth of the domestic swine and the fowls.[2] To understand this belief we must consider that the whole Jibaro religion is a typical ancestor worship, and that departed family fathers, provided the due cult is paid to them, are believed to reward their faithful descendants by conferring all sorts of material benefits upon them. The Jibaros appreciate their " lightning-stones " and all similar fetishes extremely, and would not on any account part with them.

---

[1] Nordenskiöld, *Forskningar och äventyr i Sydamerika*, p. 37.

[2] Karsten, *The Religion of the Jibaro Indians of Eastern Ecuador* (*op. cit.*), p. 20.

From Dutch Guiana there are also interesting statements about magical stone axes, " lightning-stones " (or " thunder-stones "), and similar ancient stone implements. The Indians have found them when digging in the earth, but the current belief is that they have been hurled down by lightning. These objects consist of hard pieces of stone, polished against granite blocks with such skill that many of them could still pass for real works of art. " On account of their supposed supernatural origin," we are told, " they are regarded as very good amulets, protective against diseases, dangers, and so forth."[1] Here we find exactly the same ideas as those which prevail among the Jibaros. That stone axes are believed to proceed from lightning, is naturally due to the fact that the spirits of thunder and lightning are warriors, and that stone axes have been used as weapons in war. " Lightning-stones " are also mentioned from Bolivia by Dr. Nordenskiöld, who found such both among the Chiriguanos and the Quichua-speaking mountain Indians. They formed part of the particular equipment of the medicine-men. Dr. Nordenskiöld expresses the opinion that since the " lightning-stones " bear great similarity to meteoric stones, it is probable that they have originally been meteorites.[2]

My investigation of Indian animism in South America has come to an end. The facts adduced in this, as well as in the two previous chapters, may perhaps admit of some conclusions as to the nature of the spiritual life which the savage Indian sees in the things and phenomena of the world surrounding him. The first obvious conclusion to be drawn is that, just as the spirits which are believed to animate animals and plants are nothing but human souls which have in some way been transmitted to them, so the same appears to be the case with the spiritual beings animating inorganic nature. A mountain, a rock, a stone, a river, a lake, a heavenly body, is not looked upon as endowed with an inner life in general in a sense corresponding to an " animatistic " interpretation of nature worship, nor is there any evidence that such a conception ever prevailed.

---

[1] Penard, *op. cit.*, i. 57.

[2] Nordenskiöld, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

There is, according to Indian belief, a real spirit in this object, and this spirit too, strangely enough, appears to be of human origin. In many cases it can be directly shown how disembodied souls are thought to have been associated with a particular mountain, rock, lake, star, etc. When, therefore, the animistic philosophy of the Indians ascribes personality, will, and powers to such inorganic objects, this is not a mere figure of speech, but sheer reality from a primitive point of view. In one word, *the spiritual life which the Indian assumes in animals, plants, and inanimate objects of nature is nothing but a projection of his own psychical life, and nature worship turns out to be part of the worship of man himself.* This seems to me to be the inevitable consequence of that theory of metempsychosis which the South American Indians share with many other primitive peoples.

The same fact—namely, that, with regard to the spiritual life which forms their inner principle, animals, plants, and inanimate natural objects are placed on a par with man—is also hinted at by Sir Everard F. Im Thurn when he observes that "there is nothing to indicate that the Indians know of any spirits except such as are, or once were, situated in material bodies of some kind; and these differ in rank and power only as one man or one animal differs in these respects from another";[1] and further, that "all beings—including all personified natural phenomena—are in fact of the same kind, each with a body and a spirit."[2] Another eminent authority on the Guiana Indians, Dr. Roth, is more explicit in his statements about their animistic ideas. Having given an account of the conception of an individual soul in man and animal, he goes on to state how, on the basis of this primitive psychology, a general theory of the animation of nature has been developed. "The general mainland belief," he says, "in a something (singular or plural) emanating, disintegrating, separating, etc., from the dead body of an individual or an animal, and either remaining in the immediate neighbourhood or pursuing various courses, hence becomes quite intelligible. Thus, it may associate itself with some other person, to become his spirit friend and adviser, as it were, or else may become intimately connected with the bush, forest, fields and trees; sometimes with stones, rocks, mountains, underground caverns, and occasionally with stars, clouds, lightning, with rain, river, or sea. Thus associated with spirits already there, we can speak collectively of dream, familiar, forest, mountain, water, and sky spirits."[1] Much the same results have been reached by Mr. Bandelier with regard to the Aymará religion in Peru. Bandelier quotes the definition of Indian fetishism given by Mr. Cushing with special reference to the Zuñi, according to which "the A-shi-wi or Zuñis suppose the sun, the moon, and stars, the sky, earth, and sea, in all their phenomena and elements, and all inanimate objects, as well as plants, animals, and men, to belong to one great system of all-conscious and interrelated life, and adds for his own part that this definition also applies to the Aymará.[2] It is easy to find the essential agreement between the view taken of Indian animism by these ethnologists and my own, as expressed in the course of the previous investigations.

---

[1] Im Thurn, *op. cit.*, p. 363.

[2] Im Thurn, *op. cit.*, p. 365.

If, as shown above, the Indians regard certain peculiarly-shaped rocks as men transformed into stone, and as their "ancestors," and if some of them believe themselves to be "descended" from mountains, caves, and lakes, this is to me evidence that totemism must be explained by the primitive doctrine of the transmigration of souls even when the totems consist of inanimate objects of nature. There is, it will be observed, hardly anything that prevents us from describing, for instance, the sun as the totem of the Incas or Cuzco, or the lake Titicaca as the totem of those Aymará tribes, who believed that their first ancestors had been born from that lake and accordingly held it in veneration. In the same way the Mapoyas on the Orinoco, who call a rock, Uruana, the source of their tribe, and themselves Uruanayes in allusion to this fact, may be said to have that rock for their totem.

The other thesis which I have advanced in this chapter concerns the intimate connection between animism and sympathetic magic. In many cases it can be directly shown that the supernatural properties ascribed to stone fetishes and amulets are of animistic origin—that is, derived from the spirits which are believed to dwell in mountains, rocks, and stones. Whether the fetish itself is thought actually to be the habitation of a spiritual being or only to possess an impersonal magical potency, is a wholly superfluous question to which the savage Indian himself probably, in most cases, could not give an exact answer. To him there is evidently no clear distinction between the Personal and the Impersonal, between spirit and spiritual power. There is, therefore, as far as I can see, nothing that justifies us in referring the latter notion to an earlier or more primitive stage in the evolution of thought.

---

[1] Roth, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

[2] Bandelier, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

In dealing with the animal and plant spirits in South America, I had occasion to point out that many fetishes and " medicines " obtained from the animal and the vegetable kingdom derive their power from human souls, which are believed to have reincarnated themselves in such natural objects. Since in this chapter the same has been established with regard to mineral fetishes also, we may conclude that we have found a general principle underlying the important class of magical practices which are carried out by means of fetishes, amulets, talismans, or whatever we like to call this class of objects. In the chapter on Indian ornamentation it has, moreover, been shown that many instances of what is generally called contagious magic or imitative magic—for instance, when supernatural influences are wrought through scalp-locks, names, images, etc.—must be explained, not merely by an erroneous association of ideas, but by the belief in a mysterious spiritual connection between things. But the primitive system of magic, as it appears in the occult practices of the Indians, can further be illustrated from certain other points of view. In the next chapter I propose to examine a number of rites which fall within the category of " sacrifice " or " offering," and seemingly are of strictly religious nature, but at the same time appear, on closer inquiry, to be connected with ideas decidedly magical. They throw light upon the intimate relation between magic and religion as it is shown in cult.

CHAPTER XII

MAGICAL SACRIFICE

ACCORDING to the current theory, sacrifice is in its essence simply a gift offered to a supernatural being, who is believed to have human appetites and human wants. That this is really the idea most commonly connected with sacrifice among savage peoples cannot be doubted. On the other hand, it must be emphasized that the said definition does not by any means apply to all cases in which material things of one kind or another are ceremonially offered to gods and spirits. The readiness of many students of primitive religion to explain religious practices which outwardly resemble each other by the same principle, without examining their true nature more closely, is the chief cause of the confusion still prevailing with regard to the rites termed "sacrifices." As I hope to show in this chapter, there is a whole class of both bloody and unbloody sacrifices and offerings, which cannot be explained as "gifts" to a deity in the ordinary sense of the word, but are "magical" in the sense that they are regarded as bearers of a mysterious power which is transferred to the object of the sacrificial act.

The idea of what may be called "magical sacrifice" is by no means unknown to the modern science of religion. Thus, Dr. Westermarck has pointed out that there is a kind of sacrifice, particularly in vogue among the Moors of Morocco, where the victim is regarded as a bearer of prayers, or, in other cases, of conditional curses, which are transmitted to a supernatural being, and even to a man. This kind of sacrifice, which is entirely unknown to the Indians of South America, however, is a very different thing from the magical sacrifice with which we are now dealing, and which was characteristic of, for instance, ancient Mexican and Peruvian worship. The difference especially appears in that, whereas the *l-'ar* of the Moors is supposed to exercise a constraining influence on the saint to whom it is offered, and to compel him to grant the requests of the worshipper, the Indian sacrifice is believed, on the contrary, *to augment the power of the god*

---

[1] Westermarck, *Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, ii. 618 *sqq.*

himself, in a way to be presently described more closely. As to the power possessed by the victim sacrificed, Dr. Westermarck points out that a sacrifice is also " very frequently believed to be endowed with beneficial magic energy in consequence of its contact or communion with the supernatural being to whom it is offered."[1] This is certainly an idea with which the Indians also are familiar. But, apart from the virtues which the victim or article offered may acquire through the sacrificial act, it is a fact that human victims, certain animals, and certain inanimate objects, are believed to possess magic energy in themselves, and that this is in many cases the very reason why they are offered to supernatural beings.

Before I proceed to examine from this point of view such rites as may properly be called sacrifices, it is necessary to recall certain superstitious practices dealt with in previous chapters, which seem to me to throw light on magical sacrifice, since they are at bottom founded on the same principle. Various customs of the Indians, as we have seen, have for their object to increase that spiritual power which the human body possesses by nature. A custom of this kind is body-painting, which is essentially based on the idea that the red or black painting, owing to the magical virtues ascribed to the dye itself, will give the body strength and power of resistance against evil spirits. Feathers of certain magical birds, applied to the body as " ornaments," have a similar significance, and are even used as direct means of conjuration. The same may be said of the numerous charms and amulets consisting of claws or teeth of animals, fruit shells, seeds, beads, and stones, etc., with which all Indians like to adorn themselves. All these ornaments are founded on the same principle: an object charged with magical power is worn on the body to impart strength to it and keep off evil influences.

Now it is evident that in many cases where such magical objects have been " offered " to supernatural beings of some kind, they have erroneously been interpreted as " sacrifices." The so-called grave-offerings afford one significant instance of this common misconception. Whenever archæologists have found in old graves objects of some kind which seemingly have served no practical purpose, they have been ready to explain them as " offerings " which have been laid down with the dead to be used by them in the after-life, just as in this earthly life. The theory has been adhered to even in cases where the " offerings " have consisted of such trifling things that it seems incomprehensible why they should have been sent with the dead to the other world. Some instances of this have been given in a previous chapter,[1] and I shall not repeat them here. It is enough to state that the objects which are found in old Indian graves along with the dead bodies, and are generally comprehended under the common name "grave-offerings," can be referred to three different categories: first, such as are real grave-offerings; second, such as are intended to protect the corpse against the evil spirits who cause decomposition, and thus to secure a prolonged existence for the dead person; and third, such as have been laid later into the graves by occasional visitors, with a view to protecting themselves against the death spirit residing in the grave—an idea best illustrated in the superstitious practices of the Aymará at the sepulchres called *chulpas*. In the second and third cases, of course, the objects cannot properly be called offerings, but are simply magical charms.[2] But even among those religious acts which, with more reason, deserve the name of "offering" or "sacrifice," there are, as we shall presently find, several which are based on similar magical principles.

---

[1] Westermarck, *op. cit.*, ii. 625.

A salient feature in the religion of the primitive Indians east of the Andes is the insignificant part sacrifices and offerings play in it. In their practical religion spells and incantations, dances and other kinds of magical conjuration decidedly predominate, whereas of a

[1] See *supra*, p. 244 *sq*.

[2] It must, however, be observed that the distinction between what I have termed "real grave-offerings" and such offerings as I have called "magical" is not always clear. Thus, for instance, as pointed out in a previous chapter, it is in some cases difficult to decide whether clay vessels offered at burials are meant actually to be used by the departed in the next life, or whether, being objects possessing magical powers, they are meant to serve them "spiritually" in the way indicated before. Even the food-offerings have, I believe, often been misunderstood in so far as it has been assumed that the dead would devour them materially, whereas to the savage himself there is probably only a question of a spiritual eating. It is true that to primitive man there is not the same radical distinction between the Material and the Spiritual, as to civilized man; but still to the former also a spirit is certainly a different being from a living man, and accordingly is believed to satisfy his appetite in a more "spiritual" way than a man. Among the mountain Indians in Ecuador the cult of the departed plays a great rôle, all kinds of food being offered to them on "the day of all souls." When I asked the Indians how they could think that the dead would really eat these things, although the dishes laid out obviously did not diminish, I received the answer that the dead only consume the essence or spiritual part of the offerings, but not the substance, which was afterwards consumed by the offerers themselves. The essence of the food was enough to give the dead strength and renewed vigour. In this sense all offerings to spirits may in fact be said to be "magical."

real cult, except that of the departed, only few traces are to be found. Animal sacrifices, indeed, seem to be quite unknown, and for obvious reasons, which will presently be pointed out. But the feature bears another aspect when we pass over to the territory of the Andean culture in Peru and Bolivia. The ancient Peruvians not only had a highly-developed ritual of sacrifice, but on every occasion tried to influence gods and spirits by making all sorts of minor offerings to them. These offerings, of which we have detailed accounts, were often of the most peculiar kind. An anonymous ecclesiastical writer from the time of the conquest mentions, among the things generally offered, the following: " Unthreshed corn, roots, medical herbs, especially the two which they call *coca* and *sayre* (tobacco); plumes of birds, sea-shells, or grains made of these shells called *mullu ;* woollen clothes, gold, silver, metal, fragrant wood; although this fragrant wood was not made in the way of sacrifice, but to serve as fuel to burn all the things mentioned."[1]

If we look upon sacrifice merely from the point of view of a *gift* to a deity, it is not easy to explain why particularly such things as roots, medical herbs, plumes of birds, and sea-shells should be offered. No misunderstanding would, I think, be greater than that of interpreting them simply as attempts on the part of the Indians to acquire the favour of the spirits by gratifying their appetites or their desire for property. On the other hand, we notice that the said offerings consisted of such things as those to which Indian superstition commonly ascribes magical properties. This is especially obvious with regard to medicinal herbs, coca, tobacco, and plumes of birds. But we may take it as certain that the same belief was held, for instance, of the pieces of gold and silver, or other metals, and the sea-shells or grains of shells which were likewise offered. The author just quoted does not mention on which particular occasions the said offerings were made, but we are informed as to this from other sources. The details given make us understand that, in some cases, they were prompted by the desire of the Indians to avert evils, to keep off feared spirits by " offering " them things endowed with mysterious force, whereas in other cases they served as vehicles for transferring power to beneficial deities, with a view to maintaining them in vigour.

Among medicinal plants in South America the *coca* and the *tobacco* are by far the most important. In the chapter on the plant spirits we have seen that the magical virtues commonly ascribed to medicines prepared of coca and tobacco are derived from the spirits which are believed to animate the plants. Among the offerings, which the mountain Indians of Peru and Bolivia formerly used to make to their deities, coca played an extremely important part, and the ancient practices have on this point to a great extent been kept up by the Quichuas and Aymará of the present day. But the aim of these offerings seems, in most cases, to have been to avert evil influences by virtue of the power which the coca possessed in itself. Thus, when, according to Arriaga and Cobo, the ancient Peruvians used to throw chewed coca, plumes of various colours, rags, and similar useless things at the apachitas and certain other huacas, these offerings, as already pointed out, were in fact what we may call " ceremonies of riddance." In our own days, the Quichua and Aymará Indian, when he has to pass a steep hill, a precipice, a rapid torrent, or other dangerous places in the mountains, never fails to throw down quids of coca to the spirits residing there, in order to secure a safe passage.[1] Similar coca-offerings are made to the demons haunting mysterious caves, where quids of coca, thrown by superstitious Indians, are often found attached to the walls. By coca-offerings the Aymará Indian wards off the spirits dwelling in the *chulpas*, and so forth.[2] In all these cases, the idea cannot be that the spirits should really enjoy the coca, and thus be propitiated, and moved to leave the offerer in peace. With much more probability there is the idea that the narcotic plant will stupefy them and keep them off, in the same way as an amulet keeps off supernatural dangers from its wearer.

---

[1] Anónima, *Relación de las costumbres antiguas de los naturales del Piru* (*Tres relaciones de antigüedades Peruanas*), p. 141.

Still more commonly than coca is tobacco used, in different parts of South America, as an " offering " to spiritual beings and as a means of purification. Fumigation with smoke of tobacco occurs as a religious ceremony among many tribes, its aim being to dispel evil spirits in the same way as civilized people may expel vermin by fumigations of different kinds. In general, fumigations play an important rôle in the superstitious practices of the Indians; and other plants or magical " medicines " may, of course, also be used instead of tobacco. Thus, for instance, the Jibaros fumigate their new-built houses with burnt cedar in order to purify them both from evil spirits and insects. The Jibaros evidently ascribe the same magical virtues to cedar as the Cherokees in North America. Again, men are —for instance, on mourning occasions—ceremonially purified with smoke of tobacco or burnt termitaries. The Quichuas and Aymará in the neighbourhood of La Paz fumigate their habitations by smoke produced by burning the skin of the *titi* or wild cat, certain plants, and *untu* or llama-tallow.[1] Dr. Nordenskiöld, who relates this, says that the aim of this fumigation is unknown. It is, however, interesting to note that both the skin of the *titi* and llama-tallow frequently occur in the superstitious practices of the Bolivian and Peruvian Indians.[2] When we know that the *titi* or wild cat is to the Aymará, as to other Indians, a demoniacal beast, and that the llama likewise is regarded as a sacred animal, we can understand why magical virtues were ascribed to the skin of the former and the tallow of the latter. There is little doubt that the Indians of La Paz fumigate their houses for the same reason as the Jibaros—namely, to purify them from material or spiritual pollution.

---

[1] Nordenskiöld, *Forskningar och äventyr i Sydamerika*, pp. 157, 159, etc.

[2] Nordenskiöld, *Arkeologiska undersökningar i Perus och Bolivias gränstrakter* (*Kungl. Svenska Vetenskapsakademins Handlingar*, Bd. XLII., No. 2, 1906), pp. 10, 52.

Among the Tobas in the Gran Chaco, when a medicine-man is curing a patient, he, besides conjurations of different kinds, has recourse to fumigation with tobacco. It is remarkable, however, that he gives this operation the show of being a sort of tobacco-offering to the disease spirit. At a certain moment of his treatment the medicine-man interrupts his usual manipulations and begins apparently to negotiate with him in a friendly manner, trying to induce him to leave the patient's body for good. Among other things, he offers him tobacco, asking whether he likes to smoke. This negotiation having gone on for a while, the medicine-man lights his pipe and blows thick clouds of tobacco smoke on the patient and all around. The Indians explain this tobacco-offering as a gift to the demon, which will thereby be propitiated. However, the real idea is that the smoke produced by the narcotic plant will stupefy the spirit, and compel it to leave the patient. It is characteristic of the Indian way of dealing with the supernatural world that a ceremony which, in fact, implies an attempt to expel the demon by foul means, is euphemistically called a " present " to him.[3]

[1] Nordenskiöld, " Recettes magiques et medicales," in *Journal de la Société des Américanistes de Paris*, nouvelle série, tome iv., numéro 2, p. 9.

[2] Cp. Bandelier, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

[3] Karsten, *The Toba Indians of the Bolivian Gran Chaco* (*Acta Academiæ Aboënsis.* Humaniora), p. 57 *sq.*

A peculiar and common kind of sacrifice in ancient Peru was that of *pieces of gold and silver* or *figures of men or animals* made of these and other metals. Father Cobo relates that such sacrifices were offered to the apachitas and to other huacas, the said things being buried in the place where the deity was supposed to dwell.[1] From Cobo's statement it moreover appears that human sacrifices were generally combined with this special kind of offering. If we did not know the magical virtues which the Peruvians ascribed to gold and silver, such offerings would, of course, be wholly unintelligible. Here, again, we have evidently to do with a purely magical offering: the spiritual power contained in the metals is transferred to the huaca-deities. When the gold or silver pieces are formed into figures of men and animals, this is no doubt thought to eke out their natural magical properties. Fetishes which have the form of men or animals are in vogue among the Quichuas and the Aymará even to-day, but they, of course, are no longer made of precious metals, but generally of burnt clay or stone. They are known under the name of *mullu*. The word is Quichua, but has been adopted into the Aymará language. A *mullu*, says Bandelier, is usually an animal figure; it is " good " for a great many things; and the Callahuayas—the medicine-men of the Aymará—also sell, secretly, human figures. While the white fetishes served for good purposes, the Callahuayas had fetishes of black, or at least dark-coloured stone, which were used for evil sorcery.[2]

We understand that when such fetishes are offered to supernatural beings, they cannot be termed " sacrifices " in the ordinary sense of the word. They are magical things through which mysterious influence is wrought upon the being to whom it is directed, either negatively, to keep it off, or positively, to increase its power and maintain it in vigour.

Magical offerings of particular interest are the frequent offerings of *sea-shells*, which seem to have been almost exclusively directed to the spirits of the springs. A great many of the huacas mentioned by Father Cobo are natural springs, and as to the worship paid to them, it is regularly stated that they were honoured with sacrifices of shells. Sometimes the shells were thrown into the springs entire, sometimes they were parted, sometimes they were ground into powder; on one occasion they had to be of one colour, on another occasion of another.[1] The peculiar kind of the offering, as well as the distinction made with regard to the colour of the shells and the modes of offering them on different occasions, makes it probable that special magical ideas were connected with this rite. Happily we are not on this point reduced to mere guesses. Cobo not only enumerates various springs and the offerings made to them, but also mentions the reason why sea-shells were particularly sacrificed to the springs. " They said that this was a sacrifice very appropriate [to the springs], because the springs are daughters of the sea, which is the mother of the waters; and, according to the colour the shells had, they offered them for different purposes, sometimes entire, sometimes ground very fine, sometimes only broken and parted; they also used to form certain figures of their powder and mass." Cobo adds that the Peruvians offered these sacrifices to the springs when they had finished sowing, " in order that the springs may not dry out that year, but flow abundantly and irrigate their sowings, just as they had done other years."[2] From these statements it appears that in the Peruvian shell-offerings to the springs we have an interesting instance of sympathetic magic. The shells, being " daughters of the sea," contain something of the water-power of the great ocean, and this power will be transmitted to the springs by " offering " sea-shells to them, so that they will be enabled always to bring forth water.[3] Why the shells should in some cases be broken or parted, in other cases ground to powder, may be difficult to say, but Cobo's statement that the different ways of offering them answered to the different purposes for which they were offered, indicates that there were special ideas underlying these practices. Most probably the shells were broken for the same reasons as clay vessels are broken at burials: the magical power they contained was thus set free. That mysterious virtues were ascribed to the shells is clearly set forth in the other practice mentioned by Cobo—namely, to grind them into powder, and form this powder into figures which were offered to the springs. These figures were identical with the kind of fetish which we already know under the name of *mullu*, and which, in ancient Peru, were more generally made of silver and gold. Similarly the fact that, to certain springs, sea-shells of a particular colour had to be offered, must probably be explained by the principles of sympathetic magic,[1] but in the absence of detailed information, it is impossible to express a definite opinion on this point.

---

[1] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 84.

[2] Bandelier, *op. cit.*, pp. 105, 106.

---

[1] In Cobo's account of the Peruvian huacas about twenty springs are mentioned, and as to the offerings made to them the following quotations may be made. The sixth huaca on the road Antinsuyo was the spring Corcorchaca. They offered to it " conchas molidas " (*op. cit.*, iv. 22). To another spring they offered " carneros, ropa, y conchas " (p. 24). To the fountain Ayacho they offered " Conchas de todos colores no muy molidas " (*loc. cit.*). To the spring Pachayaconora, " solo conchas, unas enteras y otras partidas " (p. 27). To the small fountain Oyaraypuquiu, " conchas de todos colores conforme a los tiempos " (*loc. cit.*). To the spring Pilcopuquiu, " conchas y ropa de mujer pequeña " (p. 29). To the fountain Chora, " conchas molidas y pedazuelos pequeños de oro " (p. 30). To the spring Lampapuquiu, " conchas de dos colores, amarillas y coloradas " (*loc. cit.*). From these quotations it appears that the offerings to the springs almost exclusively consisted of sea-shells.

[2] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 85.

[3] Cp., for instance, the statement about the well-huaca Callancapuquiu, " al cual offrecian conchas *para que siempre manase* " (*op. cit.*, iv. 18).

The Peruvian sacrifices to springs were thus magical in the sense that they had for their object to maintain and increase the power of the beneficial spirits which were believed to dwell in them, and on which their agriculture and consequently their whole existence was to a great extent dependent. This idea is also clearly expressed in the prayers which were addressed to Viracocha and the springs, in connection with the sacrifices. The prayer to Viracocha, according to Cobo, ran as follows: " Lord, thou who hast created all things, and hast thought proper amongst them to create me and the water of this spring for my sustenance, I beseech thee, do not allow it to dry out, but make it rise from the earth, as it has done other years, so that we may take the crop which we have sowed." After this they addressed their prayer to the spring itself in these words: " O, thou origin of the water who hast so many years irrigated my field, owing to which blessing of thine I receive my food, do the same this year also, and rather augment the water so that the harvest may be more abundant." Thereupon they offered the sacrifice to the spring.[2]

The Peruvians, however, not only used to offer sacrifices to the springs, but also to the sea-god, Viracocha, himself. Of these sacrifices we are informed by de Molina, and Father Ramos, of whom the former describes them to the following effect. On the day fixed for the ceremony various things were held ready to be offered to the sea-god: different kinds of *aji* or Indian pepper, a great quantity of coca, coloured clothes in which they used to dress, a kind of ornament for the head called *llautas* and *pumas*, cattle (llamas), flowers, gold, silver, carbons which they had kept from the burnt sacrifices made during the whole year. All these things were thrown into the small river Capimayo, which flows through Cuzco, more or less one hour before sunset; and the river would take them down to the sea. We are also told why these sacrifices were made: since the Creator of all things had given them a good harvest that year they offered him these things that he might favour them the next year also, beseeching him to receive the offerings from their hands wherever he was, and, in case he was in the sea, that he might receive them there.[1] Since the things mentioned are invariably such as are believed to possess supernatural virtues in themselves, we may assume that the sacrifices to Viracocha had the same magical character as the shell-offerings to the springs.

---

[1] It may have been thought necessary, for instance, that the shells should have the same colour as the bottom of the well or its water.

[2] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 77.

A very common kind of offering in ancient Peru, moreover, consisted of *woollen clothes*—that is, clothes woven of llamas' wool. This offering frequently accompanied the animal sacrifices, and Cobo states that they were so common that there hardly was a sacrifice of importance to which an offering of clothes was not adjoined.[2] Even the springs seem, in some cases, to have been honoured with such peculiar offerings. Thus, of the spring Pilcopuqiu it is stated that " sea-shells and a small woman's clothing " were offered to it.[3] Similarly, at the huaca Ayllipaṃba, a field where the Indians worshipped the earth-deity Pachamama herself, they offered a small woman's clothing to her.[4] Cobo gives some details as to the ceremonies with which clothes were offered to different deities. It was customary to dress the idols (of the Creator, the Sun, and the Thunder), as well as the embalmed corpses of the lords, with the clothes, in such a way that over the dress in which they were usually vested they wore another, being thus endowed with double clothes. Much more commonly, however, the clothes were *burnt*, and in this also different methods were followed; for in some cases they burnt them alone; in other cases they carved pieces of wood into figures of men and women, dressed them in the clothes, set fire to them and burnt them.[5] I shall have occasion to mention the Peruvian offerings of clothes again when dealing with the animal and human sacrifices. It is sufficient here to point out that their magical character is beyond doubt. The wool of the sacred llama, of course, was also sacred—at certain feasts it was ceremonially offered to the gods—and the clothes made of it were evidently believed to possess supernatural virtues. Magic sympathy also seemed to require that *female* clothes should be offered to a female deity like Pachamama.

---

[1] de Molina, *Relacion de las fabulas é ritos de los Incas*, p. 84. Ramos Gavilán, *Historia de Nuestra Señora de Copacabana*, p. 124. Both Molina and Ramos expressly state that Viracocha was in the sea to receive the offerings. Cp. Ramos, *op. cit.*, p. 124: "pidiendo a las aguas fuesen a hacer deposito de aquellas cenizas en el mar, porque allé las habia de recibir el Viracocha, en cuya honra hacian aquel servicio."

[2] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 84.

[3] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 29.

[4] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 28.

[5] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 84.

How mysterious influences are wrought upon spirits by means of "offerings," which are believed to possess supernatural power in themselves, is shown in certain superstitious practices of the Peruvian and Bolivian mountain Indians. The most detailed account of these rites is given us by Bandelier, who mentions them as examples of the achachila worship still surviving among the Aymará of the present day. The principal occasions on which they take place are at the foundation of new buildings; but Bandelier relates that such ceremonies also had to be performed previous to his excavations in search of antiquities, since without them no work of that kind was expected to be successful. When a new house had been constructed, the architect or superintendent (*ilacata*) officiated. The night before, the Indians had prepared as many tiny bundles as there were corners in the house, and an extra one for the centre. Each bundle contained the fœtus of a llama, the fœtus of a pig, a piece of llama-tallow, leaves of a plant not found on the island (of Koati), and called by them *uira-koua*, and coca leaves. These bundles were prepared by men only, and at night; and the parties were chosen the evening before by the architect. When all the workmen had gathered on the site, the architect spread before him a *lliclla*, or square piece of embroidered cloth, made like a poncho, but smaller. Every Indian took three coca leaves, arranging them in the shape of a trefoil, and deposited them on the *lliclla* while the master of ceremonies was pronouncing the following prayer: "Children, with all your heart, put coca into your mouths. We must give to the virgin earth, but not with two hearts, with one heart alone." During the prayer each of the workmen had taken a mouthful of coca leaves, and when it was finished they set to work. In the afternoon when they had again gathered, they all took off their hats, and the director said: "Children, we shall ask of god (*Dius-at*) and of the achachila and the grandmother, that no evil may befall us." Then they buried the bundle in each of the four corners and in the centre, adding to them *aji* (Indian pepper), sugar and salt. After this the workmen again, on the exhortation of the master, took coca in their mouths, and began to scatter it into the trench made for the foundation. Lastly, they threw earth on the bundles. The whole ceremony was called *tincat.*

Essentially of the same kind were the ceremonies initiating excavations. The rites, through the which earth spirits (achachilas) were "propitiated" on these occasions, were evidently regarded as particularly important, since they could only be performed by a medicine-man or shaman. The articles needed for the conjuration were: "Coca, *uira-koua*, llama-tallow (*untu*), the two fœtuses, a piece of the skin of the *titi* or wild-cat, grape-brandy, wine, and especially *mullu*, a fetish of white alabaster representing a bull or cow." The medicine-man, squatted on the ground, took off his hat and greeted the achachilas, naming all of them by name. Then he took coca, made two trefoils of coca leaves, and placed them into as many balls, made of llama-tallow, wine, *uira-koua*, a piece of cat's fur, and *mullu*, rasping with his knife from the alabaster fetish. Then making two holes at some distance from each other, he placed one of the balls in each of them, covering the hole with a stone. This sacrifice was "an official notice" to the achachilas of the main ceremony that was to take place the night following.

The next morning the Indians, satisfied that we had the achachilas in our favour, went to work, convinced that the yield would be abundant.[1]

Dr. Nordenskiöld witnessed similar rites, performed at the construction of houses, among the Quichuas of Mojos in north-eastern Bolivia. The things buried as sacrifices were about the same, consisting of llama fœtuses, the plant *uira-koua*, llama-tallow, coca, and other things. When the Indians construct a sugar-cane mill they likewise bury under the central pillar a llama fœtus hung with small bottles of *chicha* (maize-beer), wine, and brandy, adding, as usual, coca leaves also. Nordenskiöld relates that the articles to be sacrificed at the foundation of new buildings were regularly offered for sale at the market of La Paz. Among them there were such things as llama fœtuses, llama-tallow, small pots for *chicha*, glass beads, antimony, small figures of tin, representing men and animals,[2] etc. The very fact that the same things were regularly offered in sacrifices at the foundation of buildings is remarkable.

---

[1] Bandelier, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

[2] Nordenskiöld, "Recettes magiques et médicales," in *Journal de la Société des Américanistes de Paris*, nouvelle série, tome iv., no. 2, p. 7.

Bandelier, describing the *tincat* of the Aymará, observes that in the ceremony the Christian god and the fetishes are both appealed to, and that the articles offered in sacrifice represent olden as well as modern times. Thus, the llama fœtus and llama-tallow, the *uira-koua* and the coca are ancient, whereas the others are modern.[1] We might add that the ceremony has changed its original character in so far also that it is described as a *worship*. What has no doubt, in its origin, been a pure conjuration of mysterious earth spirits, has gradually developed into a real prayer in which even the name of the Christian god is mentioned. As to the articles buried in the four corners and in the centre, they are both by Bandelier and by Nordenskiöld explained simply as "sacrifices," an explanation with which I can only agree if it is understood that these sacrifices were rather magical than religious in character.

That the aim of the foundation sacrifices is to impart strength and stability to the new building, is what we could guess even if it were not expressly stated;[2] the question is only how this is thought to be effected by offering to them such things as those just mentioned. Among many Indian tribes certain ceremonies are performed with new-built houses with a view to purifying them from evil spirits or insects, but some rites also evidently have for their object to secure their stability. In the tropical parts of South America a wooden house rots and breaks down in a few years, but even when the houses are made of stone and clay, as among the Aymará of the mountain regions, they are liable to fall down, and may then, perhaps, cause destruction of life. In either case the accident is ascribed to the spirits which dwell in the earth, and who have perhaps been irritated by the digging, the laying of the corner-stones, etc. So far it is quite clear that the foundation rites are prompted by fear of supernatural dangers, and that the articles buried are at least in part addressed to the earth spirits, as is, indeed, expressly stated. But since the idea, at any rate originally, cannot have been that the spirits should take a special delight in such things as llama fœtuses, llama-tallow, the plant *uira-koua*, *aji* or Indian pepper, and tin figures, these things must be explained as purely magical sacrifices, which, through their inherent virtues, were supposed to *keep off* the invisible supernatural inhabitants of the place. But they may have had another and more positive aim too—namely, *directly to impart strength to the*

---

[1] Bandelier, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

[2] Nordenskiöld, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

new building itself. Just as the red painting with roucou, a tooth of a wild animal, a feather of a magical bird, or other amulets, are believed to give the living body strength and power of resistance, and are applied even to the corpses of the dead to protect them against the spirits who cause decomposition, so the Indians bury such amulets under the corner-stones of their houses or hang them to the main pillars supporting them with a view to keeping them stable. It should be borne in mind that the animistic philosophy of the Indians ascribes an indwelling animating principle even to objects made by human hand, such as weapons and implements, canoes and houses, and that the idea of imparting strength to them by painting and other magical means is quite familiar to the Indian mind.

The explanation which I have given of the rites performed at the foundation of buildings, that they are essentially of a magical nature, having for their object partly to keep off harmful spirits from the house, partly to make it in a positive way strong and stable, can only be set forth as an hypothesis, considering that the said rites have to some extent lost their original character; but it is strongly supported by analogous practices of the Indians. In ancient Peru it seems also to have been customary that when palaces or other important houses were constructed, hearts composed of metal objects were immured in the walls.[1] The Aymará of the present day, when they construct a church, are in the habit of immuring small idols in the walls or in the altar.[2] The custom of offering dolls and human figures in sacrifice need not necessarily be explained as a survival of sacrifices of human victims, and in the instances mentioned the idols can only be interpreted as purely magical offerings. Human figures, as we have seen, are commonly used as charms, and their spiritual power is increased when they are formed of metals which in themselves possess magical properties. Similarly, offerings of metal hearts are intelligible from the point of view that, according to primitive belief, the spirit or soul is especially concentrated in the heart. But even when the foundation sacrifices consist of human victims, as has been the case among many savage and barbarian peoples, they must no doubt be explained by the same principles.

The rites practised in connection with agriculture afford further instances of magical offerings. We have already seen that the earth (Pachamama) was the object of a regular cult in ancient Peru, and that, being regarded as a female deity, she was particularly worshipped by the women. Coca was scattered and chicha sprinkled on the fields, and at the time of ploughing, sowing, and harvesting, " ordinary sacrifices " (of llamas and human victims) were offered with many dances and drinking-bouts.[1] That the ancient rites are kept up to a great extent by the present Aymará, appears from what Bandelier tells about their sacrifices to the earth. The *tincat* above described and performed at the foundation of buildings was also offered to the soil with a view to promoting fertility. They burnt the offering, burying the ashes in the fields with appropriate invocations, and sprinkling the ground with red wine. Afterwards they dug out small quantities of whatever fruit had been raised, which was taken home to be kept until the following season. " The idea is," says Bandelier, " to give to the earth (which also is achachila) a remuneration or compensation for its favours."[2] The explanation is correct only if we take the word " compensation " in a magical sense. The coca, the llama fœtus and llama-tallow, the plant *uira-koua*, the Indian pepper, etc., the ashes of which were buried in the fields, together formed a sort of manure, through which power was transmitted to the earth, or, more strictly speaking, through which both the earth-mother and the different plant spirits received renewed energy to produce fruits.

---

[1] Bandelier, quoted by Nordenskiöld, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

[2] Forbes, *The Aymará Indians of Bolivia and Peru*, p. 232.

Fumigations of the fields for the purpose of obtaining an abundant crop are sometimes undertaken by the Indians, and they may in a way be reckoned among magical sacrifices. The Indians in the region of La Paz, according to Dr. Nordenskiöld, fumigate their fields by burning two kinds of plant: one called *koa*, of which the stalks and the leaves are burnt; the other called *huiracoya* (identical with the *uira-koua*, mentioned before). Both are procured from other places and offered for sale at La Paz,[3] from which we may infer that special virtues are ascribed to these plants. Since no further details are given, it is difficult to say whether the aim of the fumigations is simply to purify the fields from harmful spirits, or whether they are believed to promote fertility directly by transferring power to the earth. That the fields are especially exposed to evil influences is a common Indian idea. The Jibaros, for instance, believe that malicious sorcerers, who like to harm other people, may bewitch their manioc- and maize-fields by looking at them with an evil eye, in which case the field will dry up entirely. Similar superstitions seem to prevail in Guiana.[1] That fumigations by means of tobacco and other magical plants should be resorted to with a view to cleansing the fields from such devil-arrows and other evil spirits is natural. But on the other hand it is certain that, for instance, tobacco rites, performed on the fields, are often thought to benefit the latter in a more positive way also. Of the ancient Tapuyas, an old writer tells us that before they sowed their fields, their sorcerers and prophets performed ceremonies of purification over them from the morning to the evening, and the seeds, before they were committed to the earth, were fumigated with smoke of tobacco; this, they believed, would cause fertility.[2] In this connection I may mention that when, among the Jibaros, earth-nuts are sown, the women who take part in the work not only have their face painted red with roucou, but, moreover, paint each seed red with the same dye before they put it in the ground. When asked as to the reason for this practice, they could only answer that it was a custom handed down from their ancestors, that when earth-nuts are sown the seeds must be painted red in the way described; otherwise they would not grow well.[3] Since the red paint, prepared from the seeds of the *Bixa orellana,* is believed to possess magical properties, it is evident that the painting of the seeds is supposed to add to their power of germination, and thus to promote fertility.

---

[1] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 84. According to Arriaga, the women, when they were about to sow, offered chicha and mashed maize to the earth " either through their own hand, or through the sorcerers " (*Extirpación de la idolatría*, p. 11).

[2] Bandelier, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

[3] Nordenskiöld, *op. cit.*, p. 11 *sq.*

As to the rôle that tobacco plays in agriculture, I may recall the feast which the Jibaros call " the tobacco-feast of the women, " and which is held in honour of a girl when she is about to marry. Juice of tobacco is on that occasion given her in repeated doses, the idea being that the spirit of the plant shall take possession of her and fill her with a mysterious power which automatically will be transferred to the fields also, and make them produce an abundant crop. When the manioc-field is prepared for the new household, the young woman must herself plant the first manioc stick under the eyes of an old woman who previously gives her juice of tobacco to drink. The manioc stick is painted red with roucou, just as were the seeds when earth-nuts were sown.[4] If the tobacco juice were sprinkled, or the leaves scattered, directly on the fields, as the ancient Peruvians scattered coca on their fields, we could speak of real sacrifices of tobacco made to the manioc-fields. The Jibaro custom just mentioned is peculiar and interesting from the point of view that the supernatural power of tobacco is transferred to the soil *indirectly*, through the women, who are in a mysterious way associated with the manioc spirits themselves.

---

[1] Im Thurn, *op. cit.*, p. 253.

[2] de Laët, *Guilielmi Pisonis De Medicina Brasilensi libri quatuor*, p. 282.

[3] Karsten, *Contributions to the Sociology of the Indian Tribes of Ecuador* (*op. cit.*), p. 29.

[4] Karsten, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

We have now to pay attention to the Peruvian *sacrifices of animals and men*, which were addressed to the highest deities, the Creator, the Sun, Thunder and Lightning, and to certain other huacas of particular importance. The great rôle that bloody sacrifices played in ancient Peruvian cult may seem striking, considering that they are entirely unknown to the primitive tribes east of the Andes. However, this is naturally explained by the fact that animal sacrifice has been developed out of animal slaughter, and that domestic animals have been unknown to the primitive tribes except where they have been introduced by the Europeans. On the other hand, among the civilized Indians of the Andes certain animals, and first of all the llama or Peruvian sheep, have been held domesticated since olden times. The llama accordingly was the creature most commonly sacrificed to the Peruvian gods; besides, guanacos and cuys are mentioned among the animals offered. But the Peruvians never sacrificed beasts of the forest to their gods. On the contrary, Cobo expressly states that they only offered them such animals as they had themselves domesticated and reared ; for, what was given to the gods for the health and prosperity of men had to be something that they had acquired and possessed through their own labour.[1] Evidently it was regarded as necessary—and the ancient Peruvians on this point only shared the view of other uncivilized peoples—that there should be an intrinsic connection and relationship between the sacrificer himself and the animal sacrificed; and between the latter and the deity to whom it was offered. It is a well-known fact that the Indians assume a special mysterious kinship between themselves and the animals they have domesticated for their service, which, if killed at all, are only killed for ceremonial purposes. As to the llama, it was to the Peruvians a sacred animal; the souls of the departed were believed to reincarnate themselves in it, and the beast was even credited with the power of foreseeing future events. Abbé de Molina tells us an Indian legend, according to which, at Angasmarca near Cuzco, the sheep once showed great sadness; in the day they took no food, and in the night they stood beholding the stars. When asked (through the priests) as to the reason for this behaviour, they answered that a great deluge would come over the land.[1] It is natural that an animal to which such human and superhuman faculties were ascribed should be regarded as "magical" in an eminent degree; we also know the supernatural virtues inherent in llama fœtuses, llama-tallow, and llama wool. But for the same reason, no doubt, the llama was regarded as the sacrifice most appropriately to be offered to the gods. In fact, as we shall presently see, the llama sacrifices, like the sacrifices of human victims, were in ancient Peru essentially of a magical character.

---

[1] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 80.

Sir James G. Frazer, in one of the volumes of his monumental work, "The Golden Bough," has treated of "The Dying God," pointing out a fact that a civilized student of primitive religion is too apt to overlook, namely, that the gods of savage peoples are not immortal, but subject to the same fate as men and animals, in so far as they are believed to die at last. Sir James Frazer particularly sets forth this with regard to the human incarnation of the divinity, the divine king, who is put to death as soon as he shows symptoms that his powers are beginning to fail, in order that his soul may be transferred to a vigorous successor. This extraordinary measure, according to Frazer's theory, is intimately connected with the belief, deeply rooted in the mind of savage peoples, that their own safety and even that of the world is bound up with the life of one of these incarnate gods. "Naturally, therefore, they take the utmost care of his life, out of a regard for their own. But no amount of care and precaution will prevent the man-god from growing old and feeble and at last dying. His worshippers have to make their account with this sad necessity, and to meet it as best they can. The danger is a formidable one; for if the course of nature is dependent on the man-god's life, what catastrophes may not be expected from the gradual enfeeblement of his powers and their final extinction in death?" The only way of averting these dangers is to put him to death before his natural force is abated, by which his worshippers would secure that the world should not fall into decay with the decay of the man-god.[2]

The particular hypothesis as to the reason for putting the divine king to death does not concern us at present. But apart from this theory, I believe, Sir James Frazer has in the words quoted put forward a point of view which must be taken into consideration if we are to understand Peruvian sacrifice, both when it was offered to divinity itself and to its human representative, the Inca ruler. The Inca, it should be observed, answers pretty well to the type of "divine kings" described by Sir J. G. Frazer. On one important point, however, his position was different from that of the divine kings in many other parts of the world: although the enfeeblement of his powers and their final extinction through sickness or old age was certainly regarded as critical for the whole of Inca society, it never occurred to the mind of the Peruvians to try to escape the danger by putting their ruler to a violent and premature death. According to their belief the power and rule could pass from the dying Inca to his son without any natural catastrophes taking place, if only the due precautions were taken. What the Peruvians did, was not to kill their ruler, but, on the contrary, to try to preserve his life and health as long as possible, sacrifices being regarded as the most efficacious means of attaining this end. But just as they prayed and offered sacrifices for the health and strength of their divine king, so they sacrificed to their supreme deities also, simply to keep up their powers and maintain them in vigour, knowing that their own welfare was intimately bound up with the power of their gods.

---

[1] de Molina, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

[2] Frazer, *The Dying God*, p. 9 *sqq.*

The political constitution of the Inca empire was theocratic in much the same sense as in many Oriental states in ancient and modern times. The Inca was absolute ruler, simply because he was regarded as the real progeny and human representative of the sun-deity himself, and his people submitted to his rule with the same loyalty and obedience as they submitted to their real deities.[1] The relation between the Sun and his human "children," especially the Inca ruler himself, was one of relative identity, and at least to a certain extent one of mutual dependence. So intimately were they, in fact, related to each other that when the strength of the Inca abated, there was the danger that the *sun* also would lose its power and cease to send light and warmth, which naturally would mean a catastrophe to mankind. That this was really the belief of the Indians, may be inferred from the devotion with which on every occasion they prayed, on the one hand for the " life and health " and " strength " of the Inca, on the other hand, for the continued vigour of the sun: " May you never grow old; may you ever remain young; may you rise every day illuminating the earth !" And when the Inca fell ill or suffered some other adversity, this caused general excitement among the people, evidently because the illness of the Inca was supposed to bring calamity on the whole community. In fine, there are facts which indicate that the ancient Peruvians really believed their own fate and welfare to be in a mysterious way bound up with that of their king, whom they therefore no doubt adored, not with the slavish submissiveness generally shown to an earthly tyrant by his subjects, but rather with something of the devotion due to an ancestral " father " or a human god.

---

[1] When the subjects of the Inca, even his chiefs, approached their ruler, they had to carry a load on their shoulders, and to greet him by kissing his feet and hands. When at the time of the conquest Callcuchima, one of the highest chiefs of Atahualpa, came to see the Inca, he at first *stretched his hand towards the sun*, as if to thank it for the Inca having received him (Xerez, *Conquista del Peru*, p. 149). Cp. Cieza de León, *Segunda parte de la cronica del Perú*, c. 13, p. 47.

How closely the Inca ruler was associated with the sun also appears from his relation to the famous " Virgins of the Sun," who, like the Roman vestals, had to guard the sacred fire, and, according to the opinion generally held, were bound to perpetual celibacy. As Mr. Bandelier has shown, these virgins (called *Mamacuna*, " Mothers "), were probably nothing but a tribute in women exacted by the Cuzco tribe, and their chastity was in fact only relative, not absolute.[1] What interests us at present is that, being regarded as wives of the Sun,[2] they were also regarded as wives of his human representative, the Inca, who at any rate had them at his disposal. Having been selected at a tender age they had, we are told, to observe chastity when they reached mature age, " *unless the Inca selected*

---

[1] Bandelier, *op. cit.*, note 67, p. 254. Bandelier's theory is founded on the statements of Betanzos, Ramos Gavilán, and some other old chroniclers. Of Ramos' work, however, Bandelier has not seen the original edition, only the incomplete reprint by Father Rafael Sans. From Ramos' interesting account in the original edition it appears that the Virgins of the Sun were partly kept as concubines for the Inca and his chiefs, partly as servants in the temple, partly to be offered as sacrifices to the sun on occasions when human sacrifices were considered necessary (Ramos Gavilán, *op. cit.*, p. 94). Bandelier's theory on the Virgins of the Sun is also confirmed by the recently published work of Father Morúa, *Historia de los Incas*, p. 199 *sqq.*

[2] According to Fernando de Santillain, the belief prevailed that the sun-god came down to sleep with the women who were dedicated to him. " Creian del Sol muchas superstitiones, especialmente que Sol venia a dormir con aquellas mujeres que estaban dedicadas a el . . ." (Ministerio de Fomento, *Tres relaciones de antiguedades Peruanas*, p. 31).

them for himself, for he was the supreme interpreter and the living representative of the sun."[1]

But, as pointed out before, the sun was only *one* of the higher deities of the Peruvians, not *the* supreme deity. Besides the sun, which was called Punchao Inca or Apupunchao, there was the creator-god Viracocha, also known under the surname Pachayachachic,[2] as well as the god of thunder and lightning, Intiillapa or Chukiillapa. The Creator, the Sun, the Thunder and Lightning together formed a trinity of the highest deities of the Peruvians, and for the great feasts their statues were regularly taken out from their temples and set up in the market-place of Cuzco. In the island of Titicaca and Koati the moon was the principal deity next to the sun. Other huacas of importance were the embalmed corpses of dead members of the Inca family, both male and female, which also had their temples and priests attending them, and which for the great feasts were likewise taken out on the market and placed in a row on golden chairs "as if they had been living."[3] In addition to these movable huacas there were the numerous fixed ones treated of before, situated along the main roads leading from Cuzco. All of these were the objects of a fervent worship, being honoured not only with unbloody offerings of the kind we have seen, but also with sacrifices of llamas and even of human victims. Great care was taken that no one of these deities should be neglected. If, for instance, we are told, a hill was so inaccessible that they could not climb it, they mounted it as high as they could, and from there threw the sacrifice to it by means of a sling.[4] "And to all huacas universally," says Cobo, "they prayed, offering their sacrifices, for the health of the Inca."[5]

Now, in order to understand this worship it is necessary to know to what extent the Peruvians believed themselves to be dependent on their gods and the disastrous consequences which were supposed to follow in case the cult of the latter was neglected. If the due sacrifices were not offered to them the sun would not shine, the rain—which was particularly associated with thunder—would not fall, their fields would bear no fruits, their sheep would not augment, disease and misfortune of every kind would befall both the Inca himself and his subjects, in war he would be defeated by his enemies. In one word, should the sacrifices cease to be offered, the gods would cease to help their people in the struggle for existence, not so much because they would be unwilling, but *because they would lack the power to do so.* The Peruvian idea, that a state whose gods are feeble and powerless will fall an easy prey to its enemies, finds an interesting expression in the rites performed by the Incas previous to a war expedition. Father Cobo, describing their sacrifices, states, among other things, that *birds* were very seldom sacrificed. One of the few occasions when such were offered was when they were about to march against an enemy. They hunted a great number of birds of the field, made a big fire of a certain spiny wood, and threw the birds upon it. The ministers of the sacrifice walked round the fire, holding in their hands certain round or angular stones, upon which figures of toads, serpents, tigers, and pumas were painted, praying in their language: "May we have victory, and *may the huacas of our enemies lose their strength!*" Thereafter they brought certain black sheep, which they had held impounded for some days without giving them anything to eat. These they killed, praying that just as these animals were spirit-broken, so might also their enemies become discouraged.[1] The sacrifice was in this case clearly magical, but it is peculiar from the point of view that its aim was negative, and not positive: the birds and the sheep offered would deprive the gods of the enemy of their power, whereafter their people, lacking supernatural protection, would infallibly fall victims to the assailers.

---

[1] Ramos Gavilán, *Historia de Copacabana*, edition of Father Sans, quoted by Bandelier, *op. cit.*, p. 255: "mientras el Inca no las escojese, pues era el interprete soberano y el representante vivo del sol." In the original edition of Ramos' work (Lima, 1621) I have not found these words. There the passage in question runs as follows: "Quando estas virgenes pasaban de la edad florida y venian a hacerse mugeres, abian de guardar perpetua virginidad, por haber sido dedicadas al sol" (Ramos Gavilán, *Historia de Nuestra Señora de Copacabana*, p. 99).

[2] *Pachayachachic* is derived from the substantive *pacha*, "earth," "world," and *yachachina*, which is a causative form of the verb *yachana*, "to know." The word may be translated into "Teacher."

[3] de Molina, *op. cit.*, p. 43 *sq.*

[4] de Molina, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

[5] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 78.

The Peruvian huacas together formed, so to say, a complex spiritual machinery, on which the normal course of the world and the whole existence of the Inca state was dependent. But just as a machinery cannot be kept going without fuel, so the huacas needed regular sacrifices, of animals and even of men, to receive renewed energy for the maintenance of the existence and the welfare of their worshippers.

That sacrifices to the higher heavenly powers may have a magical significance, in the sense indicated above, has been recognized at least with regard to Mexican religion. "The ancient Mexicans," says

---

[1] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 82.

Sir James G. Frazer, " conceived the sun as the source of all vital force; hence they named him 'He by whom men live.' But if he bestowed life on the world, he needed also to receive life from it. And as the heart is the seat and symbol of life, bleeding hearts of men and animals were presented to the sun to maintain him in vigour, and enable him to run his course across the sky. Hence the Mexican sacrifices to the sun were magical rather than religious, being designed not so much to please and propitiate him, as physically to renew his energies of heat, light, and motion."[1] I believe that this characterization of the Mexican worship of the sun is quite right, and it would be an interesting task to show that the same principles underlay their whole system of human sacrifices. At present, however, we are only concerned with the South American sacrifices, and particularly those of the ancient Peruvians, the true nature of which we have to examine.

Our principal authorities on the worship of the ancient Peruvians are Abbé de Molina, Father Cobo, and Father Ramos Gavilán, who have treated of their sacrifices, prayers, and other rites with the minuteness that has in general been characteristic of the Catholic missionaries. As mentioned before, for the great feasts, the idols and statues of the highest gods, the Creator, the Sun, Thunder and Lightning, as well as the embalmed corpses of dead members of the Inca family, were taken out on the market of Cuzco, and placed on chairs specially provided for each of them. The idols of the deities first mentioned, we are told, had the shape of persons. Father Ramos Gavilán, speaking of the worship prevailing on the islands of Titicaca and Koati, where the moon was one of the principal deities, states that " they represented the sun in the form of an Inca of gold, of so much jewellery as to cause awe; the moon as a queen of silver, also very brilliant."[2] Of the statue of Thunder and Lightning, de Molina likewise tells that it had the form of a person, "although his face could not be seen."[3] In front of these idols the sacrifices were performed. The method observed at the sacrificial act, and especially when llamas were offered, was that, after having taken the animal several times round the idol, the priest seized it by the right shoulder and turned its eyes towards the god, to whom the sacrifice was to be made, and offered it to him with a certain prayer; whereupon he cut the throat of the victim.[4] The said prayer seems to have been rather stereotyped, and first of all consisted in the phrase:

---

[1] Frazer, *The Magic Art*, i. 314 *sq.*

[2] Ramos Gavilán, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

[3] de Molina, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

[4] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 81.

"O Creator, Sun, Thunder and Lightning, may you ever remain young, may you never grow old!"[1] This prayer was particularly directed to the Sun, who, moreover, was besought to appear every day clear and benign, and never to conceal his rays so that he might fertilize the plantations.[2] To Thunder and Lightning they said that they should give rain so that there may be food, "knowing that when it thunders and lightens it generally also rains through the order of the Creator."[3]

Now it is clear that the procedure of leading the sacrificial victim round the idol and turning its eyes towards the god previous to killing it was not merely a symbolical act, but had a real import. The idol itself was a fetish in which the supernatural power of the god was concentrated, much in the same way as the electric force is concentrated in a battery. Just as it is necessary to recharge from time to time an electric battery, so the Peruvians considered it necessary to augment the power of their gods, and this was effected by means of the sacrifice. In the blood of the sacred llama, it must be understood, there was spiritual power of the same kind as in the fetish-idol itself. If this is so, we have to establish that the Peruvian animal sacrifices to the higher gods were purely magical, in so far as they evidently were not intended to satisfy their natural appetites, but to increase their power.

That this was really the idea underlying the said sacrifices may particularly be inferred from the prayer formula which, according to Cobo and de Molina, constantly accompanied them. The most common thing is that gods are by their worshippers besought for all sorts of material benefits, which they have it in their power to bestow, but the request that they should "ever remain young and never grow old" and always "keep up their force" is singular. Father Cobo, summing up his statements concerning the Peruvian cult, emphasizes that this was really the object of the sacrifices, at least when they were addressed to the sun. "The advantages which resulted from this," he says, "were two: the one to thank him for his care in illuminating the earth and helping it to produce what is necessary for the sustenance of men, the other *to give him strength always to do so*."[4] I think we need not lay great stress on sacrifice in its quality of a thank-offering in the lower religions; the "gratitude" of the worshipper may, in this case, only be a periphrase for what is in reality a desire to receive greater benefits in the future. The true motive for the sacrifice is no doubt indicated in the latter part of Cobo's statement. The power of the god, his ability to send warmth and fertility, was dependent on the sacrifices offered to him by his worshippers. The same idea is still more often expressed in connection with the sacrifices which consisted of human victims, as we shall presently see.

---

[1] de Molina, *loc. cit.*

[2] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 63, 81. de Molina, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

[3] de Molina, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

[4] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 81: "Los provechos que resultaban desto decian eran dos: el uno agradecerle el quidado que tenia de alumbrar la tierra y ayudarle a

Father Cobo adds that there was much order in these sacrifices and that strict prescriptions existed as to the number of the animals to be sacrificed, and the colour and other qualities of each animal. For each of the gods an animal of special colour and distinctive qualities was assigned. Thus, grey llamas of the same colour as guanacos were offered to Viracocha, and white llamas to the sun; and of these the smooth ones were offered for certain purposes and with certain ceremonies, and the lanarious ones for other purposes and with other ceremonies. At Cuzco a *red* sheep was sacrificed to the sun every day, the animal being burnt, dressed in a red shirt; this sacrifice was called the "sun's offering." When they burnt the victim, they threw certain bundles of coca into the fire.[1] These ritualistic details must be explained from the principles of sympathetic magic. Thus, if Viracocha was the god of the sea, the grey colour of the llama offered to him may perhaps have been an imitation of the grey colour of the sea-water. Similarly, magic sympathy seemed to require that to the bright sun a white or—as at Cuzco—a red sheep should be offered. This idea was still more emphasized through the measure of dressing the sheep in a red shirt before it was burnt. By this procedure the god was enabled to receive and fully to assimilate the power contained in the sacrificial victim. According to the same principle we have probably to explain the offering of a spotted llama to the thunder "so that there might be no lack of water,"[2] in which case the spots on the fell of the animal may have been an imitation of the raindrops.

We now have to pay attention to human sacrifices, which in

---

criar los mantenimientos de los hombres, y el otro *darle fuerzas para que siempre lo hiziese*. Y asi lo rogaban al Viracocha. Y al mismo sol, quando le ofrecian el sacrificio, *le decian que siempre fuese mozo y que saliese cada dia alumbrando y resplandeciendo*."

[1] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 80, 81.

[2] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 81.

ancient Peru seem to have been common enough, and likewise appear to have been essentially of a magical character. The most solemn of the occasions when such sacrifices took place was when the new Inca succeeded to the throne, but they were also performed in other extraordinary cases, in times of pestilence and famine and war, or other public calamity, when the Inca personally marched out on a war expedition, and when he was ill.[1] But from Cobo's statements it appears that sacrifices of children also were made to several of the huacas, especially when they were in some way connected with the sun. Thus, the third huaca on the road Chinchaysuyo, according to this writer, was an idol of massive gold called Intiillapa (the Thunder of Sun). The idol had been made by the Inca Yupanqui, who held it for his *huauqui* or brother. He had a temple at Totacachi, and in the same temple there was the [embalmed] corpse of the said Inca Yupanqui. To this idol they frequently made sacrifices of children and performed other rites, praying that the strength of the Inca might be preserved.[2] This cult is of interest as setting forth the essential identity which there was supposed to exist between the sun and the Inca. The natural inference is that the sacrifices of children contained a mysterious power which by the sacrificial act was transmitted not only to the golden idol and the god it represented, but also to the Inca himself, whose life was thereby prolonged.

The eighth huaca on the same road was a hill named Chuquipalta on which three stones were erected representing Pachayachachic (the Creator), Intiillapa (Thunder), and Punchao (Sun). On this hill, Cobo tells us, a universal sacrifice of male and female children was made, and small golden figures of the same were offered; besides, clothes and llamas were burnt.[3]

On the road of Antinsuyo there was the huaca Chuquimarca: it was a temple of the sun on the hill Mantocalla, where, they said, the Sun frequently descended to sleep. Therefore, in addition to other sacrifices, children were offered to him there.[4] Cobo goes on to state that on the same hill of Mantocalla certain other interesting rites were performed at the time when the grains were removed from the maize-cobs. On this occasion various imitation-sheaves, consisting of carved pieces of wood and dressed up like men and women, were placed on the hill, together with a great number of wooden maize-cobs. Great drinking-bouts having been held, various sheep were burnt, together with the said wooden sheaves and cobs, and some children were also sacrificed.[1] There is little doubt that the sacrifices were performed to procure an abundant crop of maize, but they may at the same time have been addressed to the natural power on which the fertility of the maize-fields chiefly depended, namely, the sun, who was also worshipped on the hill Mantocalla. At any rate, the whole rite seems to have been magical in character, and essentially based on the idea that the wooden maize-sheaves and cobs represented the whole maize-field, the fertility of which could be influenced through them. The wooden sheaves and maize-cobs being burnt, together with the sacrifices of sheep and children, fertilizing power was transmitted to the maize-field itself.

---

[1] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 79.

[2] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 11.

[3] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 14.

[4] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 25.

The sixth huaca on the road of Antinsuyo was a house called Pomamarca. In this house the body of a wife of Inca Yupanqui's was guarded. They sacrificed to her children in addition to making other offerings.[2]

On the road of Collaysuyo there was the huaca Churucana, " a small round hill on the top of which there were three stones held for idols." They made to it ordinary offerings, and also sacrificed children " *in order that the sun may not lose its power.*"[3]

One of the huacas on the road of Chinchaysuyo was called Payán; it was a piece of plain where, they said, tremors were sometimes felt. When the earth trembled they killed children there. In ordinary cases llamas and clothes were burnt and gold and silver were buried.[4] In order fully to understand the human sacrifice in this case we may compare it with the sacrifice made to the huaca Ñan, a rite likewise described by Cobo. *Ñan* simply means " way," " road," and the huaca was situated on the place where the road to Chinchaysuyo began. Here wayfarers universally offered sacrifices " in order that the road may always remain entire, and not be destroyed and fall down."[5] There is no reason to assume that the sacrifices were made to a personal deity who dwelt in the place and caused the road to break down. Their object was probably simply to impart strength to the road itself and prevent it from being destroyed, just as offerings of different kinds are still by the Aymará offered to buildings with a view to making them stable. If this explanation is correct, it is clear that the sacrifices were magical rather than religious. The same I take to be the true nature of the human sacrifices offered to the huaca Payán at the time of tremors. There is nothing to indicate that these sacrifices had for their object to propitiate an angry god dwelling in the earth and regarded as the cause of this strange natural phenomenon. The tremor was evidently looked upon as a sign of failing vigour in the earth itself, and the sacrifices were offered to it precisely with a view to giving it strength and stability. On the island of Titicaca, in addition to other kinds of sacrifices, human victims were offered to the sacred rock and the sun associated with it. Such sacrifices, according to Father Ramos, took place, for instance, at the feast *Capacraymi*, in the month of December. Llamas, lambs, and "innocent children" were sacrificed, and their blood was sprinkled on the rock in the sanctuary. The said rock was covered with plates of gold and silver, and, as the rays of the sun were strongly reflected from the rock, the Indians said that no bird passed close to it, "unless by the art, and on the command, of the devil."[1]

---

[1] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 25 *sq.*

[2] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 28.

[3] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 31.

[4] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 11.

[5] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 16.

In all these cases, as far as I can see, the human sacrifices of the Peruvians were essentially based on the idea of *a transference of power*, and consequently of a magical nature. I am aware that this explanation is radically opposed to the theories generally set forth as to human sacrifices among savage and barbarian peoples. Thus, for instance, Dr. Westermarck explains them mainly in accordance with the gift theory: human victims are offered to angry and revengeful gods with a view to gratifying their appetite for human flesh or blood. In other cases an angry god may be appeased simply by the death of him, or those, who aroused his anger. There are also human sacrifices which are intended to serve the gods, not as food, but as attendants. Human sacrifice, according to Dr. Westermarck, is mainly based on the idea of substitution: one life is offered with a view to saving other individuals whose lives are in danger.[2]

That human sacrifice is in many cases based on such ideas cannot be doubted. Sacrifices which were substitutional in character also seem to have taken place in ancient Peru, if we may trust a statement by Acosta which is also found in Cobo's and Ramos' accounts of Peruvian religion. "When an Indian was ill or in danger—he may have been noble or of the common sort—and the diviner or sorcerer told him that he would die in that illness, he then sacrificed his own son to Viracocha or to the Sun, asking them to receive his life instead of his own, and satisfied with the death of the son, so as not to deprive the father of his life."[1] If the true motives are indicated by our authorities, it seems clear that, in this case, the son was offered as a substitute for his father. But this was by no means the idea generally underlying human sacrifice in ancient Peru. As a rule, these sacrifices had not at all for their object to appease angry gods, but, on the contrary, were performed with a view to augmenting the supernatural power of deities essentially propitious and beneficial to mankind. And this idea of human sacrifice has by no means been limited to ancient Peru. Thus, several of the cases mentioned by Dr. Westermarck must, I believe, be explained on the same lines. This may particularly be said of those human sacrifices which have for their object to put an end to, or to prevent, devastating famine, and to secure an abundant crop. Among many savage peoples bloody sacrifices of human victims are performed in connection with agriculture, and they often take place under circumstances which make it impossible to explain them as propitiatory and substitutional.[2] The very sacrifices to the sun generally had special reference to the sun's power of sending warmth and promoting fertility. Human sacrifices for the crops have been in vogue both in North and in South America. They, as a rule, have taken place at the sowing of the fields or at harvest, or at the beginning of the rainy or the dry season. Of special interest in this respect is the sacrifice of a Sioux girl by the Pawnees in 1837 or 1838, of which an account has been given by several writers. The girl was fourteen or fifteen years old, and had been kept for six months and well treated. On the day appointed for the sacrifice she was shot to death with arrows, whereupon the chief sacrificer tore out her heart and devoured it. While her flesh was still warm it was cut in small pieces from the bones, put in little baskets, and taken to a neighbouring corn-field. There the head chief took a piece of the flesh from a basket and squeezed a drop of blood upon the newly-deposited grains of corn. His example was followed by the rest, till all the seed had been sprinkled with the blood. The seeds were then covered up with earth. According to one account the body of the victim was reduced to a kind of paste, which was rubbed or sprinkled not only on the maize, but also on the potatoes, the beans, and other seeds to fertilize them. By this sacrifice they hoped to obtain plentiful crops.[1]

---

[1] Ramos Gavilán, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

[2] Westermarck, *Origin and Development of Moral Ideas*, i. 437, 438, 440, etc.

---

[1] Acosta, *op. cit.*, ii. 344. Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 79. Ramos Gavilán, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

[2] The best instance of such sacrifices is supplied by the Khonds or Kandhs of India, who formerly used to offer a human victim to their Earth Goddess, Tari Pennu, in order to secure an abundant crop, immunity from disease and accidents, and general prosperity. The rites performed on this occasion are described in detail by Sir J. G. Frazer. Somewhat different methods were followed in different villages. In some places they took the victim in procession round the village, from door to door, where some plucked hair from his head, and others begged for a drop of his spittle, with which they anointed their heads. When the victim had been killed, the priest divided it into two portions, one of which he offered to the Earth Goddess, by burying it in a hole in the ground with his back turned, and without looking. The other portion of flesh he divided into as many shares as there were heads of houses present. Each head of a house rolled his shred of flesh in leaves, and buried it in his favourite field, placing it in the earth behind his back without looking. In some places each man carried his portion of flesh to the stream which watered his fields, and there hung it on a pole. The remains of the human victim were finally burned, and the ashes were scattered over the fields, laid as paste over the houses and granaries, or mixed with the new corn to preserve it from insects (Frazer, *Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild*, i. 248, 249). Dr. Westermarck explains this rite as a sacrifice to appease the wrath of the Earth Goddess, and holds that it was, like most human sacrifices, substitutional in character (Westermarck, *op. cit.*, i. 443, 444). For my own part, I think Sir J. G. Frazer is quite right in pointing out that the treatment of the victim—Meriah, as it was called—both before and after death, presented details which make it impossible to explain the custom as merely a propitiatory sacrifice (Frazer, *op. cit.*, i. 249). His own explanation is that " to the body of the Meriah there was ascribed a direct or intrinsic power of making the crops to grow, quite

If we prefer to call this peculiar rite a " sacrifice," we have at any rate to admit that it greatly differed from sacrifices of the common pattern. First of all, the sacrifice is not said to have been offered to any god whose wrath was to be appeased; nor does it appear that the victim herself was regarded as divine. On the other hand, it is set forth with unmistakable evidence that to the body of the victim an intrinsic power was ascribed which could be directly transmitted

---

independent of the indirect efficacy which it might have as an offering to secure the good-will of the deity "; and that " the flesh and ashes of the victim were believed to be endowed with a magical or physical power of fertilizing the land" (Frazer, *op. cit.*, i. 250). This is exactly the idea which I have found underlying Peruvian sacrifice. But it is not at all necessary to assume, as Sir J. G. Frazer does, that the Meriah originally represented " the Earth Goddess or, perhaps, a deity of vegetation " (*op. cit.*, i. 250). The fact is that a human victim is in itself, independent of whether it is regarded as " divine " or not, believed to possess a spiritual or magical power—a power particularly seated in the blood of the victim—which can be transferred to the object of the sacrificial act. This I take to have been the real character of the human sacrifice of the Kandhs, both when it was offered to their Earth Goddess or tutelary deity, and when it was buried directly in the fields.

[1] J. de Smet, in *Annales de la propagation de la foi*, xi., 1838, p. 493 *sq.*; xv., 1873, 2, 77-79. Schoolcraft, *Indian Tribes of the United States*, v., 77 *sqq.* Frazer, *op. cit.*, i. 238 *sq.*

to the seeds. The paste to which the body was reduced, and which was rubbed or sprinkled on the maize, potatoes, and beans to fertilize them, offers an interesting parallel to the paste prepared of the ashes of the Meriah among the Kandhs, which was laid over the houses and granaries, or mixed with the new corn. But the power was especially seated in the blood of the victim, with which the newly-deposited grains of corn were sprinkled. The practice of the Sioux was exactly analogous to that of the Jibaros, who try to promote the fertility of their fields by painting the seeds or the manioc sticks with roucou-paint, before putting them into the ground. The only difference is that human blood is naturally regarded as a much more powerful substance than roucou-paint. If this interpretation is correct, it is clear that the Sioux rite can no more be called a sacrifice, in the proper sense of the word, than the human scapegoat who is put to death or driven over the border, carrying away all the evils of the community. In the latter case we are dealing with a transference of sins materially conceived, in the former with a transference of power, half physical, half spiritual. Both rites are in essence magical.

Human sacrifices of this kind, particularly intended to promote fertility, have not been unknown to the Indians of South America. The magical power which is ascribed to blood, even independent of sacrifice proper, appears in a practice of the mountain Indians of Peru recorded by von Tschudi. On the day of San Antonio, the natives of Acobamba made a great feast. All men were assembled on the *plaza*, were divided into two parties, and began fiercely to fight, until some of them fell down wounded or dead. Now the women rushed forth among the men, collected the flowing blood, and guarded it carefully. The object of this barbarous fighting was to obtain *human blood*, which was afterwards *interred on the fields with a view to securing an abundant crop.*[1] The Cañaris in southern Ecuador, we are told, used to sacrifice a hundred children annually at harvest. The kings of Quito, the Incas of Peru, and for a long time the Spaniards, were unable to suppress the bloody rite.[2] Similarly, according to Cieza de León, the Indians in the neighbourhood of Guayaquil in the same land used to sacrifice human blood and the hearts of men when they sowed their fields. Upon this statement, quoted by Sir J. G. Frazer,[3] Dr. Westermarck makes the remark:

---

[1] v. Tschudi, *Peru*, ii. 358.

[2] de Velasco, *Historia del Reyno de Quito*, p. ii. 35.

[3] Frazer, *op. cit.* i. 236.

"But our authority, Cieza de León, adds that those Indians also offered human victims when their chiefs were sick, 'to appease the wrath of their gods.'"[1] Cieza's statement runs at length: "There is the rumour among some that, when they made their fields, they offered human blood and the hearts of men to the beings whom they revered as their gods. . . . And when the chiefs were sick, to appease the wrath of their gods, and pray for health, they made other sacrifices of a superstitious nature, killing men, as I was told, and believing that human blood was a grateful offering."[2] From this statement it first of all appears that Cieza de León is speaking of two different occasions on which human sacrifices were offered among the Guayaquil Indians: one when they prepared their fields for the sowing, and another when their chiefs were ill. In the latter case the sacrifice *may* have been substitutional in character, but Cieza's whole statement is too short to allow of any certain conclusions. Moreover, it clearly appears that Cieza never witnessed the rites he describes; he was merely told about them, and when he says that the offering was made "to appease the wrath of their gods," he perhaps only expresses his own personal opinion. Cieza de León, who had a comparatively short time for his investigations, and was dependent upon interpreters, on the whole is only a source of secondary importance for our knowledge of the customs and beliefs of the ancient Peruvian and Ecuadorian Indians. However this may be, we may regard it as almost certain that, at any rate in the former case, the sacrifices were magical in nature. When the blood and hearts of men are offered to the fields to promote fertility, this is not done because an angry god is supposed to have a special liking for human blood and heart, but because *in these parts of the body the vital or spiritual power is believed to be particularly concentrated.* Such sacrifices, offered in connection with agriculture, therefore have the character of a *magical manure*, through which fertilizing power is directly imparted to the earth. When the savage cultivator, threatened by starvation owing to the failure of the crops, has recourse to the extraordinary measure of manuring the soil with the blood of a human victim, his procedure is, from a primitive point of view, quite logical. In each plant of the field there is, according to his belief, a spirit or soul, on which the growth of the crops depends. In the human blood there is also spiritual power of the same kind, which, when transmitted to the soil, is naturally thought to enhance its productivity. The principle is the same as we have found underlying numerous other Indian customs treated of in this work.

---

[1] Westermarck, *op. cit.*, i. 447.

[2] Cieza de León, *La cronica del Perú* (Primera parte), c. 55.

Sir James Frazer, dealing with " human sacrifices for the crops," among other things, mentions head-hunting as a means of promoting the fertility of the fields. The custom, for instance, prevails among the natives in the interior of Luzon, one of the Philippine Islands. Their principal seasons for head-hunting are the times of planting and reaping the rice. In order that the crop may turn out well, every farm must get at least one human head at planting and one at sowing. The skulls are at first exposed on the branches of two or three dead trees which stand in an open space of each village; the people then dance around them and feast and get drunk. When the flesh has decayed from the head, the man who cut it off takes it home and preserves it as a relic, while his companions do the same with the hands and the feet.[1]

If human sacrifices had the character which they are generally supposed to have, that of propitiatory offerings to angry and revengeful gods, it would, of course, be out of place to treat of head-hunting in connection with them. Now, as we have seen, human sacrifice as a means of promoting fertility is in essence magical, and from this point of view it may well be compared with the custom of head-hunting, which is in fact based on magical ideas of the same kind. I have special reason to point out this with regard to the South American Indians, because in South America also head-hunting and scalping exist as magical practices, the most important of the benign virtues ascribed to the trophy being that it will promote the increase of the domestic animals and *the growth of the crops*. Since in Indian societies agriculture is generally a female occupation, we can understand why in Gran Chaco, as in North America, the scalp-dances have first of all been dances of the *women*. But the scalp-dances of the Chaco Indians are too little known to enable us to form an exact idea about their true nature. We know much more about the ceremonies with which head-hunters, such as the Jibaros, have celebrated the acquisition of a human head and the ideas connected with this trophy. As we have seen before, one of the leading principles upon which the whole custom of head-hunting is founded among the Jibaros is, that in case the danger proceeding from the spirit of the slain enemy is paralyzed through the rites of the feast, the trophy is changed into a " fetish " charged with supernatural power which the victor can make use of in different departments of life, of which agriculture is the most important. The power of the trophy with which the victor himself becomes invested, among other things, is transferred to the soil, and will thus effect an abundant crop. This idea also explains why the slayer, during the time of the great victory-feast, becomes the adviser of the women at the cultivation of the fields, an occupation which normally, according to the division of labour prevailing among the Jibaros, is incumbent solely upon the women. Thus, with the head-trophy or *tsantsa* hanging round his neck, the slayer now and then goes out to the manioc-fields and other plantations, where he gives them detailed prescriptions with regard to their attendance.[1]

---

[1] Frazer, *op. cit.*, i. 240, 241.

There is little doubt that human sacrifice, performed to promote fertility, is believed to act much in the same way as the head-trophy in the case described. The power is in both cases the same: it proceeds from a human spirit which is present both in the head-trophy and in the blood of the victim sacrificed.

The conclusion at which we have thus arrived is that human sacrifices to procure a good harvest are in essence magical, both when addressed to a personal earth-deity and when directly offered to the earth itself. But this is by no means the only occasion when sacrifices of human victims have a magical, rather than a religious character. Thus, when one or more human lives are sacrificed to save or prolong a notable person's life, this sacrifice cannot always be explained as substitutional, in the sense indicated above. In ancient Peru, the most important occasion on which human sacrifices took place was when the Inca succeeded to the throne. This sacrifice, which was called *cepacocha* (*capac cucha*), is described in detail by Abbé de Molina and Father Cobo, whose statements substantially agree with each other and leave little doubt as to the existence of such cruel rites among the Incas. At this solemn feast representatives of the four great provinces, Collasuyo, Chinchaysuyo, Antinsuyo, and Continsuyo, had to be present. From each village and clan[2] they brought to Cuzco one or two small children of an age of up to ten years, and, moreover, brought clothes and cattle (llamas), and sheep of silver and gold and *mullu.* The said children and the other sacrificial victims had to walk once or twice round the statues of the Creator, the Sun, the Thunder, and the Moon, which had for that purpose been taken out on the market. Thereafter the Inca called in priests from the said provinces and had the sacrifices divided in four parts, one for each of the four provinces just mentioned. The Inca asked the priests to take the sacrifices with the words: "May each of you take his share of these sacrifices, and bring it off to your principal huaca and offer it to him." The priests took their portions of the sacrifices and carried them off to their huacas, strangulated the children and buried them together with the figures of silver made to represent llamas and the figures of gold and silver made to represent persons. The sheep and the clothes were burnt, together with some bundles of coca. Abbé de Molina states that "they made these sacrifices when the Inca began to reign in order that the huacas might give him good health, and preserve his kingdom and dominions in peace, and that he might reach a great age and pass his time without illness." When the sacrifices were made, great care was taken that no huaca or sacred place, however small it may have been, was left without sacrifice, "lest the huaca, lacking a sacrifice, might get angry and punish the Inca."[1]

---

[1] Karsten, *Blood Revenge, War, and Victory Feasts among the Jibaro Indians of Eastern Ecuador*, p. 47.

[2] de Molina, *op. cit.*, p. 89: " de cada pueblo y generacion de gentes," where the latter expression may have reference to the *ayllu* or clan.

Cobo's statement on the human sacrifices of the Incas in some points completes that of Molina. Thus, he tells us that the male children were of an age of up to ten years, and that the female sacrifices consisted of girls of an age of up to fifteen or sixteen years. Neither the boys nor the girls were allowed to have any defect or macula on their body.[2]

Abbé de Molina adds that different methods were followed at sacrificing the children. Some of them were killed in a way also known from the Aztec ritual—that of opening their breasts, and their hearts, still beating, being taken out and offered to the huaca to whom the sacrifice was addressed. With the blood of the victim the face of the idol, called *pirac*, was smeared from ear to ear; in other huacas the whole body was smeared with the blood. Thereafter the bodies were buried together with the rest of the offerings in a place called Chuquicancha, situated on a small hill half a league from Cuzco.[1] Cobo states that with the blood of the victims they not only smeared the face of the idols, but also the embalmed corpses of their dead kings and lords, making on them a stroke from one ear to the other, passing over the nose. In other cases the idols were totally smeared with blood, and the blood was also ceremonially sprinkled on the ground. When the victims were buried together with the rest of the offerings, the grave could not be made with the aid of an implement of copper or any other metal, but had to be made with certain very pointed sticks, and the whole work was done with certain superstitious rites and ceremonies.[2]

---

[1] de Molina, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

[2] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 78. Some details as to the mode of sacrificing children in ancient Peru are also given by Betanzos, *op. cit.*, p. 27 *sq.*

Although from Molina's statement it would seem clear that the Peruvian deities were resentful, and likely to "punish the Inca" in case their due cult was neglected, it would certainly be a mistake to draw the conclusion that the sacrifices of children were in essence propitiatory and prompted by fear. This interpretation is contradicted by everything that we know about the nature of the Peruvian gods and the worship paid to them. What we have to establish, first and foremost, is that the welfare of the whole community was believed to be intimately bound up with the welfare of the Inca, and that the enfeeblement of the powers of the divine king and his final death entailed great danger for his subjects. The Peruvians could not prevent their king from dying, but they did all in their power to preserve his strength and prolong his life by sacrifices and prayers. One of the occasions when human sacrifices were offered, as we have seen, was when the Inca fell ill. When the final catastrophe came, the great concern of the people was that the power of the old Inca might pass to his successor, the new representative of the sun, without any disturbances taking place in the regular course of things; and this, too, was effected by means of sacrifices. Now, since the strength and health of the king was dependent on the power of the huacas, it is natural to infer that the true object of the sanguinary rites was to renew the supernatural energy of the latter. That this was so, is especially indicated by the practice of smearing the idols and the embalmed corpses of the dead Incas with the blood of the victims sacrificed. Both the former and the latter were a sort of fetish or centre of power, comparable with electric batteries which had to be filled with electric force. The "force," as usual, was transferred through the blood and the bleeding hearts.

---

[1] de Molina, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

[2] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv.

If the sacrifices aimed at prolonging the life of the Inca, we can perhaps also understand why it was considered necessary that *children* should be sacrificed, a point that cannot be satisfactorily explained if we regard them simply as propitiatory. The idea seems to have been that *young* lives had to be offered for the Inca if his own life was to be effectively prolonged. In the same way, I believe, the frequent sacrifices of children among the ancient Aztecs must be explained.

We have examined the most important forms of cult in South America, and particularly in the Inca empire. This examination has led to the result that in the majority of cases neither sacrifices nor minor offerings can be satisfactorily explained on the principles of what is commonly called the gift-theory, but are in essence magical. But we have, moreover, seen that such religious rites are magical in a twofold sense. They may have for their object to ward off or expel evil or harmful spirits, and this idea is especially conspicuous in regard to unbloody offerings of coca, tobacco, or other medical herbs, feathers of birds, pieces of metal, etc. Or their aim may be to augment the power of beneficial deities on whom public and private welfare is dependent. This latter idea, as far as we can judge, was predominant in the numerous animal and human sacrifices in ancient Peru.

CHAPTER XIII

INDIAN THEORY OF GENERATION AND CONCEPTION

THERE is probably no more difficult subject in the whole field of the anthropology of the lower races than that concerning the ideas they have about the phenomena of generation and conception. The difficulty, I believe, is particularly great in regard to the South American Indians. Such profound studies of native thought, as would be necessary in order to find out their beliefs as to the mysterious processes which cause the genesis of a new human life, have very seldom been carried out in South America; and, moreover, we must assume that we are here dealing with questions which, as a rule, only the more intelligent of the savage Indians have made the objects of reflexion. If, nevertheless, I make an attempt to throw light upon this obscure subject, this is because I believe that any contribution to an interesting, but neglected side of Indian psychology will be welcome to anthropologists. Besides, what I have stated before about the belief of the Indians in the transmigration of human souls into animals, plants, and inanimate objects and the probable connection of this belief with their totemic ideas, seems to make it necessary further to elucidate the train of thought which evidently underlies their whole theory of generation and conception. The common theory of metempsychosis of course does not, in itself, explain why totemic tribes derive their descent from the particular animals and plants they regard as their totems, and revere these as their ancestors. This belief in its turn rests on the idea that the soul, having for some time been incarnated in an object of nature, will again assume human form. How this is supposed to happen, we have to investigate in the present chapter.

Sir James G. Frazer, concluding his survey of the totemic beliefs and practices among different lower races, presents a theory as to the origin of totemism which he calls the conceptional theory, and which is essentially based on the primitive notion of conception and childbirth. The ultimate source of totemism, according to Sir J. G. Frazer, must be sought in the savage ignorance of the physical processes by which man and animals reproduce their kinds, and in particular in the ignorance of the rôle played by the male in the generation of offspring. In the Bank's Islands many people identify themselves with certain animals or fruits, and believe that they themselves partake of the character and qualities of these animals or fruits. Consistently with this belief, they refuse to eat animals or fruits of these sorts, on the ground that to do so would be a kind of cannibalism; they would in a manner be eating themselves. The reason they give for holding this belief, and observing this conduct, is that their mothers were impregnated by the entrance into their wombs of spirit animals or spirit fruits, and that they themselves are nothing but the particular animal or plant which effected a lodgment in their mother, and, in due time, was born into the world with a superficial and deceptive resemblance to a human being. Sir J. G. Frazer holds that this primitive belief solves all problems connected with totemism: it explains why people commonly abstain from killing and eating their totemic animals and plants, why they partake of the character and qualities of their totems, why they believe themselves to be descended from their totemic animals and plants, and so forth.[1]

Apart from the bold generalization that this theory implies—from one single case conclusions are drawn as to the origin of a world-wide institution—it is open to other objections also. First of all, what is the true nature of the spirit which is in the way described believed to gain entrance into the woman's body ? Since Sir J. G. Frazer rejects the theory which derives totemism from the doctrine of metempsychosis, his opinion is evidently that this spirit is not a human soul, temporarily incarnated in an animal or a plant, but a sort of special animal or plant spirit which, after it has passed into the woman, is born into the world " with a superficial and deceptive resemblance to a human being." But what is it that induces animals or plants, or their spirits, regularly to seek entrance into women's bodies in order to become men, and how comes it, in general, that they are born into the world in *human* form ? Being real animal or plant spirits, they ought naturally to be born as animals and plants, and not as human beings. But the whole question, at least as far as American totemism is concerned, becomes different when we consider that Indian animism knows nothing of a particular animal or plant soul as distinct from the human soul. All those mysterious spirits which are believed to direct the animals and animate the plants, and even

[1] Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy*, iv., 60 *sq.*

to inhabit lifeless things, on closer analysis appear to be nothing but souls of men which have temporarily or permanently assumed the shape of such objects of nature. Or, more correctly speaking, in reality there exists only one kind of spirits which take the shape of men, animals, plants, or inorganic objects, according to the bodies or things they inhabit for the time being. The establishment of this fact leads us to complete Sir J. G. Frazer's theory on an important point. This theory stops short where it should properly begin. Totemism certainly assumes a peculiar primitive idea of conception. But fully to understand it we ought not only to take savage man's ideas of conception, but his whole theory of generation and descent into account. We should know the whole history of the spirit which is believed to have entered into the woman by the wonderful conception. Then it will appear that this spirit is nothing but an Indian ancestor which has been reborn in one of his descendants, having meanwhile been incarnated in an animal, a plant, or some other object of nature.

To the savage Indian—as far as we may generalize his ideas—birth and death have not the same radical importance as to civilized man; they are rather only two transitional moments in the history of the living beings, and neither mean an absolute beginning nor an absolute end. When a child is born, the life thus coming into being is not a new life in the strict sense of the word. A spirit which has existed earlier in human form has again assumed that form. It is simply one of the forefathers that reappears in the newborn. And, on the other hand, when an Indian dies, he does not by any means cease to exist. Death does not imply the extinction of life. It only implies a transition from one form of existence to another. In the moment of death the soul is temporarily released from the bonds of the visible material frame. Thereafter it may freely hover about in the air or in the neighbourhood of the grave, or it may rise to the heavens, and transmigrate into the sun, the moon, the stars; or operate in some natural phenomenon like thunder; or last but not least, it may again materialize itself in some natural object on earth, be it an animal, a plant, a mountain, a rock, a lake, or what not. But the soul's staying in these objects is only temporary. It expects to reassume human form, and is in due time reborn in one of the descendants of the Indian man or woman whose body it animated earlier. This belief may be held also by those few peoples who have the notion about a special paradise or realm of death where the souls of the departed are assembled. The soul does not stay for ever in this paradise, but is obliged to continue, after the lapse of some time, its eternal wandering. Thus, for instance, the Avas or Chiriguanos in Bolivia believe that the departed Indians go to a sort of "merry fields," called Ibuoca, where they lead a joyous life for some time, feasting and drinking maize-beer. After a prolonged sojourn in this happy place the soul is supposed to transmigrate into a fox, after the death of which it passes through other transformations.[1] Many tribes moreover, as shown before, seem to believe that the future rebirth of the soul essentially depends on the care with which the dead body is preserved. Hence the precautions taken among the more civilized Indians to prevent the decomposition of the body by embalming, painting, etc.

Thus the human life, including a part of the animal and the plant life, presents an eternal circular course where there is apparently no beginning and no end, and where the only things changing are the successive incarnations and transformations, through which the soul has to pass.

The existence of such a view can be shown both by direct and indirect evidence. Clear indications of it are found, among other things, in the Indian system of name-giving. Previous investigations have led us to the conclusion that the numerous superstitions relating to names in South America rest on the fundamental belief that the soul of a person is inherent in his name, or that the name is a sort of vehicle for the soul. Keeping this in mind, we must assume that the well-known Indian custom of naming children after certain objects of nature, especially after animals and plants, has a deeper foundation. When the Indians give their children such names, or even names after mountains, rocks, rivers, and lakes, as was the custom for instance in ancient Peru, this is evidently originally due to the idea that the soul of the ancestor, reborn in the child, has previously been incarnated or materialized in some of these objects of nature. From this point of view we can understand the statements of several travellers, according to which the Indians name their children, either after animals and plants, or after their ancestors. Thus of some tribes in north-west Brazil Mr. Whiffen states: "New-born infants are named by the medicine-man with ceremonial tobacco taking. Boys are generally called by the name of a bird or animal, usually the name of their father's father. Girls are given the names of plants or flowers. This name is never used in speaking."[1] Dr. Koch-Grünberg gives a full account of the names customary among some other tribes in the same part of South America. These names seem, as a rule, to be taken from animals, birds, and fishes. Thus, among the names of the Siusi, we have such as Soco (heron), Urubu (black vulture), Alligator, Trahira (fish), Agouti (rodent), Yararaca (snake). Among male names of the Kobéua the following are mentioned: Tapir, Capibara (water-haas), Bat, Owl, Vulture, Hen, Acara (fish), Crab, and Deer; and among female names: Woodpecker, Yandia (fish) Aracu (fish).[2] This account also gives us an idea about the animal beings in which, among these tribes, the dead were believed to reincarnate themselves, and they, in fact, are much the same as those represented in the mask-dances at the death-feasts. Among the Mundrucús on the Tapajoz, the child, shortly after birth, "receives the name of an animal or a plant."[3] The same is reported of several other Brazilian tribes. Thus among the Marauhas the eldest relative gives the newborn child "a name customary in the family";[4] and among the Tecunas it usually receives "the name of one of the forefathers."[5] Of the Yumanas it is stated that they name their children "after their ancestors," the names being different for boys and girls.[6] The ancient Tupis, according to Hans von Staden, called themselves after wild animals and used to give themselves many names. For each enemy that the Tupi warrior killed during his life, he took a new name. The women, again, were called after birds, fishes, and tree-fruits. "One of the savages gave his son a name. He thought that he would give him the name of one of four forefathers, and said that the children who bore those names threw well, and became cunning at catching slaves."[7] Of the Guiana Indians we hear the same. The personal names generally have reference to animals and plants, and a child as a rule gets a name which is customary in the family. This, for instance, holds true of the Arawaks and the Macusi, among whom the child shortly after birth receives the name of an animal, a plant, or an object of nature. Formerly it was the medicine-man who had to find out the name.[8]

---

[1] See *supra*, p. 275.

---

[1] Whiffen, "A Short Account of the Indians of the Issa-Japura District," in *Folklore*, March 13, 1913, p. 46.

[2] Koch-Grünberg, *Zwei Jahre unter den Indianern*, i. 183; ii. 146.

[3] v. Martius, *Beiträge zur Ethnographie Amerika's*, i. 393.

[4] v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 427. [5] v. Martius, i. 446. [6] v. Martius, i. 485.

[7] *The Captivity of Hans Stade of Hesse* (Hakluyt Society), p. 140 *sq.*

[8] See Koch-Grünberg, *Vom Roroima zum Orinoco*, Bd. III., *Ethnographie*, p. 142. Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p. 219 *sq.* Roth, *Animism and Folklore of the Guiana Indians*, p. 305.

De Rochefort, speaking of the names customary among the Caribs of the Antilles, says that the majority of the names they gave their infants were taken from their ancestors, as well as from trees which grew on their islands, and also from some incident which had happened to the father during the pregnancy of his wife, or during the childbirth.[1]

In ancient Peru we meet the same principles of name-giving, persons being named not only after animals and plants, but also after inanimate objects of nature. Cieza de León relates that the natives in some provinces took the names of quadrupeds, birds, fishes, and plants; and others, who pretended to be descended from mountains, rocks, lakes, fountains, etc., even seem to have taken names after such objects. Cieza himself in his service had an Indian whose name was Llama (Peruvian sheep), and another whose name was Urcu, that is, Rock. He adds that some Indians considered it very important to take the names of their fathers or ancestors.[2]

Of the names of the Jibaros, as far as they are taken from the vegetable kingdom, I have stated before that they are closely connected with the animistic philosophy of these Indians. A special sex is ascribed to each kind of tree or plant. Some of them are regarded as men, whereas others—and in fact the majority—are regarded as women. This distinction is kept up in the names given to male and female children. Since most garden plants are "women," we encounter, among female names, such words as Mama (manioc), Inchi (sweet potato), Mika (bean), etc.; whereas men are named after big trees and plants with extraordinarily strong properties. Most male names of the Jibaros, however, are animal names, such as: Jawara (tiger), Pangi (the water boa or anaconda), Yakuma (howling monkey), Ambusha (owl), etc.[3]

I ought to add, however, that this system of name-giving is not, among the Jibaros, based on a regular system of metempsychosis. These Indians certainly believe that the souls of men may incidentally transmigrate into animals, and even into trees, and other objects of nature; but I have not found definite ideas of these particular souls reassuming human form through some kind of natural birth. However this may be, the common Indian custom of naming children after animals and plants, and at the same time after ancestors, is unquestionably an evidence pointing to a general belief, now perhaps forgotten among most tribes, in the return of departed souls through a new birth. Such a general belief in a rebirth also seems to be, or once to have been, familiar to the Jibaros. " After a long time the souls of the dead are again reborn in some of their descendants. This is the reason why we give to a newborn child the name of one of its forefathers." Such was the explanation which was given me by an old Jibaro medicine-man with whom I discussed these questions. Other Jibaros again assured that they did not know anything about the rebirth of the departed. Evidently these are questions to which common people in savage societies devote but little thought.

---

[1] de Rochefort, *Histoire naturelle et morale des Iles Antilles*, p. 552.

[2] Cieza de León, *La cronica del Perú* (Primera parte), c. 65, 84, 100. The Quichua word *urcu* means "mountain" or "rock," but Cieza, who did not know Quichua, erroneously translates it with *carnero* ("sheep").

[3] Karsten, *Contributions to the Sociology of the Indian Tribes of Ecuador* (*Acta Academiæ Aboënsis.* Humaniora, i: 3, 1920), pp. 7, 63.

It is remarkable, however, that there are some tribes in North America, and more particularly such as have totemism in very developed form, that seem to have very clear ideas on this point, believing that dead persons come to life again in newborn children of their own family or clan. Thus of the Tlingits, we are told that children usually bear two names, one from the mother's family, another from the father's. The first is given directly after birth by the mother and her relatives, and is generally the name of a prominent maternal ancestor. The other name is that of a dead relative on the father's side. It is ceremonially given at a great feast in memory of the dead; and many Tlingits, who are not able to celebrate such a feast, entirely lack this second name.[1] We are, moreover, told that when a pregnant woman dreams of a dead relation, the Tlingits think that the soul of the deceased has entered into her, and will be born again. And when a newborn child resembles a dead kinsman or kinswoman, they conclude that it is the dead person who has come to life again, and accordingly give it his or her name. And a Tlingit may often be heard to say, " When I die I should like to be born again in such and such a family "; or, " If only I were killed I might return to the world in happier circumstances." The Tlingits not only believe that the dead are reborn in men and women, but also take steps to facilitate their rebirth. Thus, when a beloved person dies, the relatives often take the nail from the little finger of his right hand and a lock of hair from the right side of his head and put them into the belt of a young girl of his clan who has just reached maturity. Afterwards she has to lead a very quiet life for eight months and fast for as many days. After her fast is over and just before she eats, she prays that the dead person might be born again from her.[1] In this custom to facilitate rebirth we recognize the general Indian belief that the soul of a person is particularly seated in his hair and his nails.

---

[1] Holmberg, *Über die Völker des russischen Amerika* (*Acta Societatis Scientiarum Fennicæ*, iv., 1856), pp. 318, 319, 345.

The same ideas of the transmigration of souls prevail among the Haidas. They think that the soul of a dead ancestor is often reborn in the person of one of his descendants, and whenever this is supposed to have happened, the newborn child naturally receives the name of the ancestor or ancestress who has come to life again in him or her. The medicine-men or shamans profess to learn in a dream or vision the name of the person who has just been reincarnated, and the infant is named accordingly. To this imaginary power of detecting the dead among the living, the Haida medicine-men owe a large part of the influence which they exercise over the people. It is believed that a man is always reborn into his own clan, and generally into his own family. Thus a Raven man always comes to life again as a Raven, never as an Eagle; and, similarly, however often an Eagle man might die and be reborn, at each reincarnation he would still be an Eagle to the end of time. Similarly, of the Chepewyans, a Tinneh tribe, it is recorded that they have some faint notion of the transmigration of the soul; so that if a child be born with teeth, they instantly imagine from its premature appearance, that it bears a resemblance to some person who had lived to an advanced period, and that he has assumed a renovated life with these extraordinary tokens of maturity.[2] Of the Tinnehs or Dénés in general, Father Petitot observes that " the ancient faith in metempsychosis and the transmigration of souls is deeply rooted in a great number of tribes. It is usually the little children born with one or two teeth who pass for persons resuscitated or reincarnated. It is the same with those who come into the world soon after the death of somebody. . . . I had much trouble in dissuading the Hareskins from this superstition, and I doubt whether I succeeded. I could not banish from the mind of a young girl the idea that she had lived before her birth under a different name and different features than those with which I was familiar; nor could I prevent an old woman from claiming the possession of a neighbour's child under the specious pretext that she recognized in it the transmigrated soul of her deceased son. I have known of several such cases. The Hurons shared the same belief. According to Malte-Brun, they buried their little ones beside the paths in order that women who passed by might receive their souls, and bring them afresh into the world. This power of reincarnation is by the Dénés extended equally to animals."[1]

---

[1] Swanton, *Social Condition, Beliefs, and Linguistic Relationship of the Tlingit Indians* (*Twenty-Sixth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology* 1908), p. 429.

[2] Swanton, *Contributions to the Ethnology of the Haida*, p. 117 *sq.*

If there is no statement in regard to the South American Indians where ideas of the rebirth of human souls are equally clearly expressed, this may only be due to the deficiency of our information respecting their beliefs in these matters. Their whole theory of generation, in any case, seems to be implicitly based on such ideas. If this is so, we have reason to examine what ideas the primitive Indian forms himself about the process by which a new human being comes into existence. The first inevitable conclusion on this point is that at the sexual act, as far as its connection with pregnancy is realized, a man at any rate does not transfer his own soul to the new being. The animating principle in the child engendered must come from outside in some way, being the soul of a dead ancestor on the father's or the mother's side, which has been waiting for rebirth. *Which* particular ancestor it is that has been reborn in the child is not always easy to decide, and among some tribes it is the business of the medicine-man to find out this, just as it is usually the official medicine-man who bestows a name on the infant.

But from whence does the physical germ of the new being arise ? In other words: what is the father's and the mother's proper rôle at procreation ? In order to give an answer to this question I may at first relate the information I myself got about the ideas of the Jibaros. Conception, according to these Indians, is brought about by the new-moon in connection with the natural sexual intercourse between man and woman. The new-moon also is believed to effect the menstruation of the women, of which physiological process the Jibaros use the expression *nantu weinikama,* "the moon has seen her." The time most suited for cohabitation and conception is that falling between the "dying" moon and the following new-moon. During this time the Jibaro usually has intercourse with his wife with a view to begetting a child. He is, however, of opinion that, as a rule, a woman cannot be made pregnant by one single act of sexual intercourse. Several are necessary; the new being has to be engendered as it were by degrees, the new-moon always playing the part of a promoter of the creating process. When the Jibaro has cohabited with his wife in the period between two months, the following new-moon will, in some mysterious way which the Indians cannot precisely account for, bring about the first development of the fœtus. Every following new-moon, in connection with repeated cohabitation, adds a little to it, until in the course of nine months the fœtus is full-grown and the birth takes place.[1]

---

[1] Petitot, *Monographie des Déné-Dindjié,* p. 59.

This statement of the Jibaros I understand in the way that the germ of the child comes from *man*, who at the sexual act puts it into the woman just as a seed is sown in the earth, the new-moon thereby efficaciously aiding in developing the fœtus. This perfectly agrees with what Professor von den Steinen states about the ideas of the Xingú tribes. Inquiring about their reasons for practising the custom of couvade, he found that reason ultimately in the fact that to the savage Indian *man* is the bearer of the eggs which he, to express it shortly and plainly, puts into the mother, and which she hatches during pregnancy. Moreover, the idea is carried still farther: the father is identical with the egg, and the child is consequently the little father. That this is so, that the child is the father, is also shown in the language, the words for " egg " and for " father " being of the same derivation in the Bakairi language.[2] The same idea of the male acting as the parturient parent proper is encountered in Guiana. It clearly appears in a Carib legend related by Dr. Roth, which runs as follows:

Uraima (a cultural hero) once had in his possession a bird's egg which he kept in a calabash; he took great care of it until it should hatch out. He met two girls on the road: they saw the egg and asked him to let them have it. " No," he said, " I cannot." They worried and even followed him, but he still refused. So they seized the egg, and in the course of the scuffle broke it. Uraima then spoke to the women as follows: " Since you have done this, trouble will follow you from now onward. Up to the present, *the egg has belonged to man.* For the future it will belong to woman, and she will have to hatch it." It is only the female that lays the eggs nowadays.[3]

In spite of the discovery of the Caribs that the real bearer of the eggs is woman, most South American tribes probably still hold the ancient belief alluded to in the myth. That the idea of conception which von den Steinen found on the Xingú, Roth in Guiana, and I myself in Ecuador, expresses a general Indian view of course can only be set forth as an hypothesis, but it is an hypothesis which, in combination with certain other facts—for instance the couvade practices—has a good deal of probability. The act of conception, according to this primitive view, implies that the embryo, which has its proper origin in the father, is in some mysterious way associated with a soul which has previously perhaps inhabited an animal, a plant, a rock, a heavenly body, or some other inanimate object. By this association of the body and the soul a new human being arises, which consequently is more in its physical than in its spiritual nature a part of the parents, and first of all of the father. The possibility of this wonderful process can hardly awaken doubts in savages to whom ideas about a birth which we should call " supernatural " are so familiar as to the Indians of South America. It is certainly highly improbable that there exist to-day any tribe so backward as not to be aware, in a general way, of the connection between sexual intercourse and pregnancy. But partly they fail to realize, even at the natural sexual act, impregnation to happen as it really happens; partly they do not understand that sexual intercourse is the *only* way in which a woman becomes pregnant. Impregnation may also. according to Indian ideas which still are quite common, incidentally take place in a woman without her having intercourse with a man at all. Thus there are numerous instances showing that women are thought to become impregnated by some invisible spiritual beings directly entering into them. The idea that evil spirits in the form of snakes attack women at their menstrual periods and may make them pregnant, as we have seen, is encountered among several tribes in different parts of South America.[1] Other similar instances of women being made pregnant by spirits or demons of some kind are likewise quite common.[2]

---

[1] Karsten, *Contributions to the Sociology of the Indian Tribes of Ecuador* (*op. cit.*), p. 68.

[2] v. d. Steinen, *Unter den Naturvölkern Central-Brasiliens*, p. 337.

[3] Roth, *op. cit.*, p. 323.

It is true that in such cases we are, as a rule, dealing with a kind of conception which is not looked upon as normal and not desired, being brought about by a malignant spirit and giving as product a demoniac being or a deformed monster. We cannot, therefore, it may be argued, assume that they throw light upon what is to the savage Indian the normal process of conception, nor could totemism be based on such superstitions. In regard to this objection it must be borne in mind, first, that there probably is no *essential* difference between an evil spirit of the common pattern and a recently disembodied human soul—for all kinds of spirits and demons have probably in America originally been human souls; and secondly, that the decisive point in the present case is not the nature of the spirits who bring about impregnation, but the manner in which it is brought about. If the Indians believe in a "supernatural" (*i.e.*, an abnormal, non-desired) birth occasioned by demoniacal snakes or birds, by the rainbow, and so forth, they may also believe in a "natural" birth of a similar kind—*i.e.*, a birth where the begetting being is not an evil demon but a harmless spirit, and the result of the conception not a demon or a deformed monster, but a normal human child. As a matter of fact, South American ethnology offers some instances of this kind.

---

[1] See *supra*, p. 145 *sq*.

[2] See, for instance, the ideas current among the Ecuadorian Indians, in my *Contributions to the Sociology of the Indian Tribes of Ecuador* (*op. cit.*), p. 68 *sqq*.

In the folklore of the Guiana Indians, Dr. Roth found some traces of a belief in the production of children without necessary connection with sexual relationships. Women can get babies if they want them, by eating certain *binas* (charms), plant or animal. "In a case of this kind," Dr. Roth states, "the child is already in existence, its body being attached to and by some mysterious means passing into the body of the mother. As to the origin of such babies, all I could gather is that they arrive in the water or in the bush, and hence may make their appearance in our mundane world either as a gift from the Water Spirit, or at the instigation of the Spirits of the Forest, with or without the agency of the *piai*."[1] This statement is in accordance with the theory just set forth by myself. The *bina*-charm harbours the embryonal beginning which in ordinary cases is transferred to the woman by man at the sexual act, but the soul, which has associated itself with the body of the child to be born, is evidently one of those human souls which, according to Dr. Roth, emanating from a corpse, have found a temporary resting-place in waters or in forest and bush, and are therefore called respectively Water and Forest or Bush Spirits.[2]

Some Brazilian tribes believe in a demon called Uauyara, which is supposed to appear in the shape of a sea-fish (*boto*), and is regarded as the tutelary spirit of the fishes. Uauyara, we are told, is a great lover of the Indian women. Many of them attribute their first son to some trick of this deity, who now surprises them during the bath, now assumes the guise of a mortal to seduce them, now seizes the girl under the water where she is obliged to yield to him.[1] That animals, or spirits incarnated in animals, are able to make women pregnant must once have been a common belief in America since the Indian myths so often speak of such cases. Children born from such unions may sometimes appear as animals, sometimes as men. Thus, for instance, in some myths of the Avas we hear of the Fox-god, Aguaratunpa, and the Armadillo-god, Tatutunpa, marrying women or making them pregnant by their cunning tricks. Aguaratunpa was the principal deity of the Avas, and the fox was one of the animals in which the souls of the dead were believed to reincarnate themselves. A similar belief was held in regard to the armadillo.[2] Stories of jaguars and stags or deer making love with women and begetting children with them seem to be particularly common in South America. Similarly, there are among the North American Indians numerous myths which speak of " supernatural " births by animals or animal spirits, and of marriages taking place between men and animals—myths which are all the more significant as their aim is precisely to account for totemic descents. Such myths, where the dividing line between man and animal is practically obliterated, of course must be explained from that belief in an intimate spiritual relationship between both which is one of the fundamental dogmas of Indian animism. Whether the present Indians take them to be true or merely regard them as stories, they unquestionably point to an earlier primitive idea of conception. Even if there is no thought of a real sexual connection between women and animals, as in many of the myths, totemic peoples probably believe, or once believed, that spirits which have been lodging in animal bodies are actually able to transmigrate anew and to enter into the bodies of women, being thus reborn in human form. We may assume that this mostly takes place after the death of the animal in question, when its indwelling human soul has again been disembodied. This belief must in many cases have been strengthened by some of those innumerable associations of ideas which are peculiar to a savage mind. It is enough that a savage woman feels her womb quickened in the moment she gets sight of a certain animal, that she will assume a spirit to have made its way into her from that animal. Such cases are known from Australia, but there are probably similar ideas in America.

---

[1] Roth, *op. cit.*, p. 325.

[2] Cp. Roth, *op. cit.*, pp. 153, 170.

---

[1] Magalhães, *O selvagem*, ii. 137.

[2] Nordenskiöld, *Indianerleben*, pp. 258, 267 *sq.*, 271, etc.

We now have to examine whether there are any ideas of a conception by plant spirits. One instance of this we have in the very myth of Mani related before.[1] The spirit of Mani, by which the Indian girl became pregnant without having intercourse with a man, appeared in fact to be a plant spirit—and at the same time the soul of a white woman—who later on produced a fruit hitherto unknown to the Red Man, namely, the manioc. In a still more interesting way, the same ideas appear in the famous Yurupary mysteries of the Uaupés Indians. The Yurupary myth itself has been mentioned before.[2] In analyzing this myth we found certain animistic ideas underlying it: first, that the magical power of the sacred *paxiuva*-flute was due to a human soul inhabiting the tree of which it was made; and secondly, that with this flute certain other useful trees which were also inhabited with human souls could be influenced. But for our present purpose it is especially necessary to examine the mysteries connected with the celebration of the Yurupary feast, because they seem to me to throw an interesting light upon the Indian theory of conception.

The mysteries on the one hand have the character of a sort of initiation for young men at the attainment of puberty, on the other hand are held to celebrate the gathering in of the main crops. They consequently take place among some tribes when the fruits of the *assai* and *bacaba* palms grow ripe,[3] among other tribes when the fruits *ingá*, *pupunhá*, *castanhá*, *umarí*, and others reach maturity.[4] The Indians, both men and women, arrive at the festival properly decorated with their ornaments and with the body painted in black and red colours. Certain monotonous mournful songs are chanted, after which marriages take place under the assistance of the *payés* (sorcerers). Now the women are sent away to the forest, and three of the men start to blow on the large Yurupary flutes. This having been continued for a while, one or more Indians appear dressed in a peculiar mask-dress, called *macacaraua*, so as to resemble the legendary demon Yurupary. They perform a sort of dance, jumping about on all fours among the other men, and striking to the right and to the left with sticks. The flutes are again blown for a short while, whereupon the women are allowed to reappear. Both sexes, armed with whips, start to lash each other, the men the women and *vice versa*. Small flutes are played, *kaschiri*-beer is drunk in large quantities, and the dance goes on the whole night. All become more and more intoxicated, and in the same degree more licentious. Ornaments and piece of clothing are by-and-by thrown away, and at last all partakers in the feast indulge promiscuously in sexual intercourse.[1]

---

[1] See *supra*, p. 313 *sq*.

[2] See *supra*, p. 309.

[3] Koch-Grünberg, *Zwei Jahre Unter den Indianern*, i. 187.

[4] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, ii. 293. Coudreau, *La France équinoxiale*, ii. 189.

Dr. Koch-Grünberg on inquiry could get no explanation as to the meaning of the Yurupary ceremonies he witnessed, and is of opinion that their real significance was no longer known to the Indians themselves.[2] In Coudreau's account of the mysteries there are, however, some details which seem to show that this was not so, but that at least the leaders among the Indians were fully aware of the profound religious and magical ideas underlying them. In fact, many of the ceremonies mentioned—as the flute-playing, the mask-dances, the lashing with whips, the drinking of *kaschiri*-beer—are encountered in the practical religion of the Indians all over South America, and as to their significance there cannot be any doubt. The Yurupary festival is essentially a festival of fertilization. The spirits which inhabit the fruits, and which are conceived as human souls transmigrated, are supposed to enter into the women during the ceremonial sexual intercourse that takes place at the feast, in order to be naturally reborn in human form. In this way the useful plants, or their spirits, are propagated, at the same time as fruitfulness is likewise promoted in the human world. This is the reason why the mysteries are held at those seasons when the most important fruits grow ripe and reach their highest point of development. This is also the reason why they are celebrated at the time when the young men attain to sexual maturity and in connection with contracting marriages. But the mysteries also have a gloomier aspect. The fecundation by the spirits incarnated in the plants is not without risk. Since the spirits are departed human souls, the direct contact with them is fraught with danger owing to the taboo of death attaching to them. Hence a series of conjurations must precede the incident with which the mysteries reach their climax—the fecundation of the women through the spirits. Thus the ceremony with the *macacaraua* is an ordinary mask-dance; the men wearing this dress are conjuring the Yurupary demon by imitating him. Similarly, by means of the flute-playing, both Yurupary and his subordinate minor demons are conjured, and

[1] Coudreau, *op. cit.*, ii. 187-189. Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 188; ii. 293. Dr. Koch-Grünberg, however, speaks nothing of the sexual orgies with which the mysteries end. In my account I have chiefly followed Coudreau's statement, which is more detailed and seems to be based on a more thorough knowledge of these ceremonies.

[2] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 189 *sq.*

influenced for the desired end. The mask-dance and the flute-playing evidently form the most critical moments of the magical ceremonies. By means of them the spirits are compelled to enter into the sacred instruments, the masks (*macacarauas*) and the flutes. Hence these instruments are afterwards taboo to the uninitiated weaker partakers in the festival, the women. If any woman sees the flutes, and especially the masks, we are told, she will at once be put to death.[1] The demon will invade her with the consequence that she will herself be changed into an evil demon and probably become a danger to other people also.[2]

The women are allowed to reappear as soon as these preliminary conjurations have been finished and the dangerous instruments have been removed. A new act in the celebration of the mysteries begins, chiefly consisting in lashing with whips and in drinking *kaschiri*-beer. The marriage candidates, women as well as men, have to come in intimate contact with the tabooed spirits and must previously be properly prepared for this purpose. The flagellations have for their object to conjure the spirits and to render them harmless. The lashing ceremony is a detail which shows that the Yurupary mysteries in part have the same character as ordinary death-feasts, since at such feasts the " propitiation " of spirits by sanguinary flagellations or by other blood-letting practices are of frequent occurrence. As we have seen, all these ceremonies have essentially a purificatory significance. Similarly, the ceremonial drinking of the sacred *kaschiri*-beer must have for its object to counteract the baneful effects arising from the contact with the spirits.[3]

---

[1] Coudreau, *op. cit.*, ii. 188. Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 189.

[2] Dr. Koch-Grünberg expressly states that it is believed that *koai*—*i.e.*, the demon in whose honour the feast is celebrated—will kill the woman (*op. cit.*, i. 189). It is a common Indian idea that a person who has thus been invaded by an evil spirit will himself die and be changed into a demon, and become a great danger to his fellow-tribesmen. This may be prevented by killing the person infected before he dies a natural death. It is for this reason that, for instance, sickly and deformed children are put to death, and the same I take to be the true reason for the capital " punishment " imposed upon women who happen to see or touch the tabooed instruments. Dr. Koch-Grünberg thinks that the men keep the women excluded from the mysteries simply from fear lest they should lose their authority over them, in case the secrets about the demons were revealed to them (*op. cit.*, i. 349). This explanation reveals the same misunderstanding of the customs of the Indians as Dr. Koch-Grünberg's other explanations of the Yurupary ceremonies.

[3] I cannot, therefore, agree with the view Dr. Koch-Grünberg takes of the Yurupary mysteries, for instance, when he says that Yurupary himself is a

The fact that the conception by the plant spirits is the principal thing in the Yurupary ceremonies may also be inferred from an interesting passage in Coudreau's account of these mysteries. While the people are thus engaged in the sexual orgies and the bacchanalia, they do not, we are told, forget Yurupary, the principal demon in whose "honour" all these ceremonies are performed. From time to time he is invited to put in appearance in order to divert himself a little. But the demon answers, through the mouth of a *payé*, that he cannot come, for *if he had intercourse with a woman, he would be changed into a snake*, or, as is stated by others, *a snake would be born out of this intercourse.*[1]

In this statement we again meet the peculiar and evidently quite common Indian idea that when a demon, as may sometimes happen, makes a woman pregnant, he thereby assumes the shape of a snake, the product of this cohabitation likewise being a snake-formed creature. From this we also gather what is the difference between a real demon like Yurupary, and such spiritual beings as are believed to animate the plants. Yurupary is the head demon presiding over the fruits, and over all minor plant spirits. He has probably himself originally been an Indian ancestor—that is, an ordinary human soul like the rest—but his demoniac character is now too fixed that he could any more reassume human form or beget a human child. In case, therefore, he makes a woman pregnant, she will not give birth to a human being, but to a demoniac monster, a snake. With the individual plant spirits which have perhaps more recently been associated with the body of a man it is otherwise. With them the human character is still predominant, and they may consequently be reborn as men.

The Yurupary mysteries, as we have seen, throw a new light on the intimate and mysterious connection which to the Indian mind there

---

"Sonnenheros," and the festival in his honour originally "eine Art Dankfest, um den Geist zu befriedigen, und zugleich eine Zauberhandlung um ihn duch Tänze, Kasteigungen und Geisselung zu beeinflussen und weitere reiche Ernte zu erlangen" (*op. cit.*, i. 190). There is nothing to show that the Yurupary mysteries have the character of a thanksgiving festival; they throughout have a purely practical object. Similarly, the old theory that flagellations, mutilations of the body, and other practices of the same kind occurring as mourning rites, serve no other object than to please a cruel demon who takes pleasure in other people tormenting themselves implies a gross misunderstanding of the practices in question. In the same way Dr. Koch-Grünberg gives a misleading explanation of the puberty ceremonies connected with the Yurupary mysteries, by which the youths are admitted among the grown-up men, when he says that "dies Aufnahme wird duch alle möglichen Kasteigungen erschwert, damit den Jünglingen der Ernst der Sache zum Bewustsein kommt" (*op. cit.*, i. 348).

[1] Coudreau, *op. cit.*, ii. 190.

exists between fertility in nature and fecundity in the human world. The Indians of north-west Brazil are probably not the only ones who know festivals similar to those held in honour of Yurupary. Thus, for instance, some Chaco tribes, at least the Chorotis and the Ashluslays, have a feast which bears a certain resemblance to the Brazilian mysteries just described. The feast is held at the time when the *algaroba* and some other important fruits reach maturity in the months of December and January. This is also the time when courtship and marriages take place among these natives. The Chorotis and the Ashluslays believe that the fruits are animated by "good" spirits, and the dances performed at this season are supposed favourably to influence these spirits and to make the fruits abound. Likewise, sexual intercourse is promiscuously indulged in by the young men and women taking part in the dances, and seems to be essential to the feast. It is to me probable that in these festivals of the Chaco Indians, held to promote fertility, we have survivals of mysteries akin to the Yurupary mysteries of the Uaupés Indians, which have partly lost their original significance.

The ancient Peruvians had an interesting festival of fertilization, which may be mentioned here, as being possibly based on the same ideas about a natural conception by plant spirits. The festival took place in the month of December, at the time when the fruit *paltay* or *palta* (*Persea gratissima*) grew ripe, and the persons taking part in it had to prepare themselves for it by fasting, which lasted for five days and during which they did not eat salt nor *utsú* (Indian pepper), and by abstention from sexual intercourse. On the day appointed for the feast, men and women assembled in a certain place between the fruit-gardens, all perfectly naked. At a given signal they started to run a race to a hillock, situated pretty far off. Every man who, during the race, reached a woman had sexual intercourse with her on the spot.[1]

Pedro de Villagomez is the only ancient chronicler who mentions this peculiar feast. From this fact von Tschudi rightly concludes that it must have been limited to a few provinces in ancient Peru, just as it only could take place in valleys with a warm or even hot climate. Von Tschudi remarks that the feast no doubt had a profound religious significance, but he makes no attempt to explain it.[2] Although the details given are too scanty to enable us to make out its true meaning with certainty, a comparison with the Yurupary mysteries lies within easy reach. The main intention of the ceremonies described, accordingly, must have been to make the *paltay* fruit abundant, but at the same time fecundity would be promoted among the Indians. The *paltay* fruits, according to the belief of the Peruvians, were animated by spirits which were magically influenced and compelled to enter into the women during the sexual orgies that formed part of the feast. Since the contact with such spirits is always critical, we can understand the fasting as a means of preparation for the mysteries. Moreover, the *running*, which evidently formed an essential part of them, was a magical ceremony of the same kind as, for instance, wrestling and lashing with whips at certain feasts: its object may have been to neutralize the harmful effects arising from a contact with the tabooed spirits.

---

[1] Villagomez, *Carta pastoral de exortación é instrucción*, fol. 47.

[2] v. Tschudi, *Culturhistorische und sprachliche Beiträge zur Kenntniss des alten Peru* (*Denkschriften der kaiserl. Akad. der Wissensch.*, 1891), p. 26.

Lastly, if spirits of the departed may take up their temporary abode in inanimate natural objects, there should be the possibility for women to conceive even from such objects. Sundry instances of an idea like this are found. Thus in the Peruvian myth of Pachacamac we hear of a woman who was made pregnant by the rays of the sun penetrating into her.[1] Again, in a myth of the Warraus of Guiana we are told about a woman who became pregnant, during bathing, by a tree trunk floating in the water.[2] This myth recalls the statement about the Avas, who believe that the soul of a departed Indian ultimately transmigrates into a tree trunk,[3] and shows that even to such a spirit there is the possibility of a human rebirth through a supranormal conception.

The peculiar way in which, according to the idea of the primitive Indians, conception may take place also appears from some of their phallic dances. The phallic dance which Dr. Koch-Grünberg witnessed among the Kaua and Kobéua in north-west Brazil, and describes in connection with his description of their mask-dances, is especially significant on this point. Each dancer, besides being masked, wore a huge *membrum virile*, twisted of bast, which he held close to the body. In their slow ceremonial dance the men mimicked the sexual act, and by movements of their hands pretended to spread the sperma all about. In this way they wandered through the houses and the plantations, to the edge of the wood, and among the crowd of the women and girls, who stood around looking at the curious spectacle.[4]

---

[1] v. Tschudi, *op. cit.*, p. 255.

[2] Im Thurn, *op. cit.*, p. 378.

[3] See *supra*, p. 275.

[4] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 137; ii. 193 *sqq.*

Dr. Koch-Grünberg expressly states that the object of these ceremonies was to propitiate or magically influence certain demons of fertility, and that they were believed to have the power of effecting prosperity and fruitfulness both in the animal and plant world and among men.[1] From this point of view it is important to note that the phallic dance, like other dances, formed part of a funeral feast and was performed " in honour " of the dead. The prosperity which the ceremony brings is regarded as a " compensation " for the dead tribesman who has been taken away.[2] The conjecture seems natural that the phallic demon is simply identical with the spirit of the dead, and that the dance by which he is magically influenced has for its object to compel him to act as a fecundating principle, either by transmigrating into the plants and effecting that they will be fruitful, or by entering into a woman's body through the natural sexual intercourse in order to be reborn as a man. Here again fertility in nature appears to be in a mysterious way bound up with human fecundity.

Many Indian tribes in South America believe that the spirits of their dead kinsmen, who continue taking an interest in their surviving relatives, are able to confer certain material benefits upon them, especially fertility of the fields and fruitfulness of the women. The cult which some tribes in Ecuador pay to their departed relatives has such an object. This idea, however, is seldom carried to such realistic details as among the Indians of north-west Brazil.

In certain Indian customs we, moreover, find attempts directly to transfer the soul of a deceased person from his bodily remains to his descendants or surviving relatives. Some strange " endocannibalic " practices, particularly known from among the Brazilian Indians, seem to have such a significance. Thus, among the Kobéua, according to Dr. Koch-Grünberg, the bones of the dead forefather, with the exception of the skull, are disinterred some fifteen years after his death, and burnt in a big fire outside the *maloca*. The carbonized bones are thereafter carefully collected, put in an earthenware vessel, and hung over a fire which is kept up for a whole month both night and day until the bones are reduced to ashes. The powder thus obtained is furthermore pounded in a mortar. At the death-feast, to which a great number of people are invited, a vessel with *kaschiri*-beer is put in the middle of the *maloca*, and the bone-powder is allowed to fall down into the drink through a sieve. The chief stirs up the brew with a stick and gives each of the persons present a large calabash of it to drink, but only to old family men who are already fathers of three children, and likewise only to elderly women who have given birth to three offsprings.[1]

---

[1] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 138; ii. 195. [2] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, ii. 196.

Much in the same way Wallace describes the endocannibalic feasts in vogue among the Tarianos, the Tucanos and some other tribes on the Amazons. About one month after the funeral they disinter the corpse, which is then much decomposed, and put it in a great pan or oven over the fire, till all the volatile parts are driven off with a most horrible odour, leaving only a black carbonaceous mass, which is pounded into a fine powder and mixed in several large *couchés* (vats made of hollowed trees) of *kaschiri*. This is drunk by the assembled company till all is finished.[2]

Wallace adds that "they believe that thus the virtues of the deceased will be transmitted to the drinkers." Instead of the word "virtue" I think it would be more correct to use the word "soul." It is no doubt the soul or spirit of the defunct, of which there is still something left in the bones, which is in the way mentioned transmitted to the living. The ceremony must be explained as an attempt to secure the rebirth of the deceased forefather in his descendants. The detail mentioned by Dr. Koch-Grünberg, that only elderly men and women, who were fathers or mothers of at least three children, were allowed to drink of this beer, is not quite clear, but it shows that the endocannibalic feast was essentially based on some ideas of generation. The intention may perhaps have been to enable these persons to continue their procreative functions further, a measure which was not necessary for younger people. Again, the *kaschiri*-beer played the same part in these ceremonies as at ordinary death-feasts. The transference of the soul of the dead kinsman to the living is fraught with danger. The mixing of the bone-powder in the sacred manioc-beer no doubt had for its object to remove the taboo of death, and to neutralize the baneful effects possibly arising from it.

The above instances show us some of the ways by which the Indians fancy that the wandering human soul proceeds from reincarnation to reincarnation. They, in fact, hardly give us more than a hint as to the ideas these natives form themselves about the phenomena of generation and conception, and they may perhaps, on the whole, belong to a stage already passed in the evolution of their thought. But be these ideas and customs merely survivals or not, they undoubtedly are of great interest, not only from a general psychological point of view, but also from the particular point of view of explaining totemism with its seemingly absurd and incomprehensible belief in the descent of men from animals, plants, and inanimate objects. If savages really believe that the soul, after it has left one human body in death, and before it has again taken its abode in another through a new birth, has in the meantime passed through some other form of existence, being reincarnated for instance as an animal or a plant, it is not difficult to understand why certain groups of people should reckon kinship with such natural objects. If within a definite group of kindred individuals, or what is generally called a clan, the belief exists or has once existed that since times immemorial the souls of departed kinsmen on leaving the body have passed into a certain animal or a certain plant, having at last been reborn in some of their descendants, it is intelligible that this clan should believe itself to be descended from that particular animal or plant and revere it in a way as an ancestor. Thus, for instance, the bear becomes the totem of a clan where every member is supposed to be, or was once supposed to be, after death temporarily changed into a bear by a transmigration of his soul into that animal; the eagle becomes the totem of a clan all members of which are supposed to be temporarily changed into eagles, and so forth. Totemism, in other words, can only arise where the doctrine of the transmigration of souls is brought into a regular system, a definite relationship being established between a whole group of kindred people and a particular species of animal or plant. The whole system, moreover, seems to be founded on that primitive theory of conception which has been discussed in the present chapter.

---

[1] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, ii. 152.

[2] Wallace, *A Narrative of Travels on the Amazon and Rio Negro*, p. 498. The same custom prevails, or once prevailed, for instance, among the Caribs (Lafitau, *Mœurs des sauvages Amériquains*, ii. 444), among the Yumana on the Rio Yapura (Spix and Martius, *Reise in Brasilien*, iii. 1207), and among the Mauhé on the Rio Tapajoz (Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 404). Father Rivero, moreover, relates it from among the Salivas on the Orinoco (*Historia de las misiones de los llanos de Casanare*, p. 211).

CHAPTER XIV

THE COUVADE OR MALE CHILDBED

IN dealing with primitive Indian theory of conception I had occasion to point out certain ideas which may help us to understand another much-discussed custom of the South American Indians—the custom generally known under the name of couvade or male childbed. Although many explanations have been given of this peculiar and seemingly absurd birth-custom, the sociological problem it involves can hardly be said to have been completely solved. This is partly due to the fact that the couvade, although often observed and commented upon by travellers and ethnographers in South America, has very seldom been studied with the thoroughness necessary for its perfect understanding, but partly also to our defective knowledge of the psychology of savage man in general, and particularly of his magical and animistic beliefs. From my own study it will appear that the latter have first of all to be taken into account if we are to make out the true origin and significance of the male childbed.

Although the couvade is known to be practised by uncivilized peoples in many different parts of the world, South America has especially been regarded as the classical land of this custom. Myself I had an opportunity to study the different forms of it among several tribes both in the Gran Chaco and in Ecuador. I also venture to believe that the explanation of the male childbed which will be given here with special reference to the natives of South America will, broadly speaking, hold true with regard to uncivilized peoples in other parts of the world.

I may begin by saying a few words about the diffusion of the couvade in America. A German sociologist, Dr. Kunike, has tried to show that in the New World the northern parts of South America, especially Brazil and Guiana, have been the principal centres of the couvade. It likewise exists, or formerly existed, among some isolated Chaco tribes such as the Abipones, but is unknown to the tribes in the southern part of the continent as well as to the peoples of the

Andean culture. From northern South America it has, according to Kunike, probably been spread to some few peoples in North America, where, on the whole, the custom is very little practised.[1]

This account, however, seems to me to have little value, as it rather shows us where the couvade has been observed by travellers in South America, than where it really exists. That it is most common in the Amazonian territories probably is due only to the fact that there are more Indian tribes in the northern parts of the continent than in the south, and also to the fact that the peoples in the deep and inaccessible virgin forests naturally have remained less affected by the levelling influence of civilization than the rest. As to Chaco, the couvade has certainly not been an exceptional phenomenon amongst the Abipones and sundry other tribes. Thus, it has no doubt been practised by the whole great Guaycurú-group to which the Abipones belonged. Among the Tobas in Bolivia I have myself found, if not the actual custom of male childbed, at any rate ideas intimately associated with it. The same holds good of the Mataco-Noctenes, who also know a sort of couvade; and among the Chorotis it exists nearly in its most typical and original form.

Again, the tribes in the extreme south, the Jahgans and the Onas, are supposed not to know this custom at all. Yet the Rev. T. Bridges, our best authority on the Fuegians, makes the following statement relating to the childbirth customs of the Jahgans: " The mother and father of a newly born child . . . are both careful as regards their food, thinking some kinds are hurtful to the child. They generally also keep quiet for a week or two after the child's birth," etc. He also mentions that the parents are called by a special common name, *yimbuna,* the meaning of which, however, he does not explain.[2] A recent student of the Jahgans, Dr. Koppers, states that the couvade among them exists " in a pretty circumstantial form," but unfortunately he gives us no account of these circumstances. Dr. Koppers, however, mentions that after the birth of his first offspring the father abstains from doing hard work for many months, because, according to an old tradition of the Jahgans, this would do harm to the little one. Some Jahgans observe these rules after the birth of the follow-

[1] H. Kunike, " Das sogenannte Männerkindbett," in *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie,* Berlin. 43 Jahrg. 1911, p. 555. Cp. Nordenskiöld, *De sydamerikanska indianernas kulturhistoria,* p. 175.

[2] Bridges, *Manners and Customs of the Firelanders* (*The Voice of Pity for South America,* xiii., 1866), p. 183.

ing children also.[1] In short, it seems clear that the couvade has been equally familiar to the now half-civilized natives of Tierra del Fuego as to the savage Indians in the virgin forests of Guiana and Brazil. Moreover, if the Aymará and the Quichuas in the mountain regions of Peru and Bolivia do not practise this usage in our days, this *may* be due only to the influence of European civilization, these Indians being now nominally Christians. Ideas closely connected with the couvade certainly prevailed. Thus Father Cobo relates of the ancient Peruvians that " when the women were in childbed their husbands, and sometimes they themselves, too, used to fast, abstaining from certain foods,"[2] and Cieza de León, moreover, tells us that when the child was born with some deformity—for instance, with six fingers on one hand—both parents grieved and fasted and went through other ceremonies.[3] The belief in an intimate mysterious sympathy between the child and both parents, but especially the father, as we shall presently find, is essential to all couvade practices.[4]

The couvade is founded upon ideas so deeply rooted in the Indian mind that we cannot doubt its having been familiar, in one form or another, to all South American races, at a primitive stage of social evolution. If some writers on Indian customs do not mention it, this is not necessarily an evidence that it does not exist, or did exist once, among the peoples they are describing. Customs of this kind easily escape the attention of superficial observers, and, moreover, they tend to disappear or become modified under the influence of civilization. Thus, when Dr. Kunike distinguishes two types or categories of the couvade—the couvade proper or the *real* male childbed, and the couvade improper consisting in fasting, keeping quiet and abstaining from doing hard work, etc.[1]—this distinction has no true foundation in facts. Contrariwise to what Dr. Kunike assumes, both these forms of the couvade are intimately connected and depend on the same primitive ideas, the second type being nothing but a modification of the first.

---

[1] Koppers, *Unter Feuerland-Indianern*, p. 211. We notice that according to Dr. Koppers these rules of abstinence were observed for " many months," whereas, according to Bridges, they only were observed for one or two weeks. We may assume that Bridges' statement is the correct one. The rules of the couvade are very seldom observed for months.

[2] Cobo, *Historia del nuevo mundo*, iv. 175.

[3] Cieza de León, *La cronica del Perû* (Primera parte), chap. 65.

[4] As to the North American Indians, the couvade has probably been much more commonly practised by them formerly than it is nowadays known to be. As for the Californian tribes, the existence of this custom is fully demonstrated. Cp. M. Venegar, *Noticia de la California*, i. 94 (the Californian tribes in general), Bancroft, *Native Races*, i. 391 (the Central Californians), *ibid.* i. 412 (the Southern Californians). Speaking of the birth-customs of the Creek Indians of Taskigi Town, Mr. Frank G. Speck says, amongst others: " The mother was allowed to partake of food from the time the child was born, but *the father fasted for four days thereafter* " (Speck, " The Creek Indians of the Taskigi Town," in *Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association*, vol. ii., part 2, Lancaster, 1907, p. 116). Several similar statements could be quoted.

The best records of the custom of couvade in South America we have from the Caribs, Arawaks, and other Indian tribes in northern Brazil and Guiana, through writers such as de Rochefort, du Tertre, Schomburgk, and others. As for the tribes of the Rio Xingú, we have the valuable statements of Professor von den Steinen, which especially are apt to throw light on the custom.

De Rochefort, one of the early writers on the South American Indians, describes the custom among the Caribs of the Antilles as follows:

"At the same time as the woman is delivered her husband takes to his bed, wailing and acting the *accouchée*. . . . But the disagreeable thing for the poor Carib, who is in bed instead of the woman, is that he is obliged to observe a diet for ten or twelve successive days, nothing being given him except a small piece of cassava per day, and a little water into which also a bit of this root-bread has been solved. . . . Even after this he abstains, sometimes for ten months or a whole year, from several viands, such as the manati, the tortoise, pork, fowl, fish, and delicate things, fearing, from a pitiable foolishness, lest this should do harm to the infant." He goes on to state that they had another strange practice besides: after the fasting was finished his shoulders were freely scarified with the tooth of an agouti, an operation which the man had to endure without showing any sign of pain. They believed that the more endurance the father showed in this trial, the braver a man it would make of his son. But the noble blood was not allowed to fall on the earth and to get lost; it was collected with great care and rubbed into the face of the infant in order that he might become still more generous.[2] Du Tertre, speaking likewise of the Caribs of the West Indies, says that the father had to fast strictly for ten days, whereupon he began to eat cassava only and drink *oüycou* (maize-beer) for a whole month. "When the forty days are up they invite their relations and best friends, who being arrived, before they sit to eat, cut up the skin of this poor wretch with agouti teeth, and draw blood from all parts of his body, in such a way that from being sick by pure imagination they often make a real patient of him." Thereafter they "take sixty or eighty large grains of pimento or Indian pepper, the strongest they can get, and after mashing it well in water, they wash with this peppery infusion the wounds and scars of the poor fellow, who, I believe, suffers no less than if he were burnt alive. However, he must not utter a single word if he will not pass for a coward and a wretch. . . . Through the space of six whole months he eats neither birds nor fish, firmly believing that this would injure the child's stomach, and that it would participate in the natural faults of the animals on which its father has fed. For example, if the father ate turtle, the child would be deaf and have no brains like this animal; if he ate manati, the child would have little round eyes like this creature, and so on."[1]

---

[1] Kunike, *op. cit.*, p. 556.

[2] de Rochefort, *Histoire naturelle et moral des Iles Antilles*, p. 550.

Of the couvade among the Macusis of Guiana Schomburgk gives the following account, which in some points completes the above statements of de Rochefort and du Tertre. After the birth, he says, the father suspends his hammock by the side of that of his wife, being confined with her. The confinement lasts until the navel-string of the newborn falls off. During this time the mother is regarded as unclean; hence if special huts for both parents cannot be had, their beds are separated by a wall of palm-leaves. During this time neither the father nor the mother are allowed to do any work, and in the night the father may leave the hut only for some moments. He is forbidden to take his usual bath, nor must he touch his weapons. Both parents can allay their thirst only with lukewarm water and satisfy their hunger only with cassava bread. Still more curious is the prohibition for the father to scratch himself with his finger nails; for this purpose he can only use a splinter specially provided from the midrib of a cokerite palm. An infringement of this prohibition would bring lifelong sickliness for the child as a consequence.[2]

I have quoted these statements at some length, because I think all ideas connected with the couvade are clearly set forth in them. It now remains to explain and elucidate them by facts gathered from other South American tribes.

The couvade cannot be fully understood unless we regard it in connection with some other ceremonies performed at childbirth among savage tribes. That these ceremonies are essentially of a religious, or, as we should say, superstitious nature, has not always been realized by students of primitive customs, but appears the more clearly the more we are able to penetrate into the religious views of uncivilized man.

---

[1] du Tertre, *Histoire general des Antilles*, ii. 371.

[2] Schomburgk, *Reisen in British-Guiana*, ii. 314.

The couvade has often been said to consist therein, that at the birth of the child the father is confined *instead of* the mother. The woman is apparently delivered without pain, she does not lie in bed, and almost at once resumes her ordinary occupations, whereas her husband keeps to his bed or hammock, pretends to be sick and in labour-pains, fasts, and so on. There are really some tribes where this seems to be the case to a certain degree. Thus, for instance, something like this holds true of the Chorotis in the Gran Chaco. Similarly, about the Guiana Indians Dr. Roth states: "As with the Caribs, so with the Arawaks and the Warraus it is practically the husband who is isolated and does the 'lying in.' Indeed, in these three tribes the woman is isolated only during actual delivery, which takes place either out in the bush in a separate shelter, or in a compartment specially partitioned off from the rest of the house."[1] But on the whole it would be a mistake to take this to be essential to the custom. The fact is that *both* the father and the mother have to observe certain rules with regard to their conduct and diet for some time after the birth of their child. The general Indian idea is that both the newborn child and its parents, and especially the first mentioned, are badly exposed to supernatural enemies, and owing to the close and mystical relation which exists between the parents and their offspring, any carelessness on the part of the former is supposed to entail unfortunate consequences for the latter. The evil effects upon the condition of the child, according to the belief of the Indians, always follow through the medium of evil spirits, who partly attack the child directly, partly indirectly through its father and its mother. Moreover, although the connection which exists between the child and its father is generally considered closer than that existing between the child and its mother, there are some instances of a contrary view. Thus, the Rev. T. Bridges says of the Jahgans of Tierra del Fuego, after having mentioned the precautions to which both parents have to subject themselves: "The mother almost directly after her child's birth resumes her various duties of fishing in the canoe, gathering shell-fish, fetching water, etc. Should a sucking child fall sick, the sickness is sure to be attributed to something the *mother* has eaten, who, under such circumstances, does not eat whale blubber."[1] Of several other tribes in different parts of South America, such as the Caribs and some other Indians in Guiana,[2] the Indian tribes of Orinoco,[3] various tribes of Brazil[4] and Venezuela,[5] the Guarayos[6] and Chiriguanos[7] of Bolivia, it is expressly stated that the father and the mother alike have to keep quiet, fast, and observe other rules of conduct.

---

[1] Roth, *Animism and Folklore of the Guiana Indians*, p. 321.

The primitive idea that a newborn child is especially exposed to supernatural dangers is not difficult to understand; like most savage superstitions it has an underlying stratum of reality. The child is naturally in the beginning of its existence in a delicate state, and as a matter of fact the mortality among newborn children is—owing to climate and the rough conditions of life—terribly great in many parts of South America. The Indian from his standpoint cannot fail to ascribe such facts to supernatural causes, and the ceremonies at birth, therefore, generally assume a religious or magical character. The custom of washing the newborn, for instance, is among many tribes clearly based upon the same idea as baptism among some barbaric peoples and in the early Christian Church: that the pollution of birth and evil spirits may be washed away by water. Thus we are told of the Jahgans of Tierra del Fuego that " children generally within a few days after their birth are dipped in the cold sea from a superstition that it makes them grow well."[8] The belief in the purifying, " disinfecting " power of salt, which the invisible enemies cannot resist, is a widespread superstition in America as elsewhere. Among the ancient Tupis of Brazil the first thing to be done was to wash the child well, whereupon its lip was pierced and its body painted in red and black colours by the father.[9] The custom of painting the newborn with red paint, as we have seen, is commonly practised in South America,[10] the idea being that the paint protects the delicate little one against evil influences. For the same reason, among the

---

[1] Bridges, *op. cit.*, p. 183.

[2] Schomburgk, *op. cit.*, ii. 314. Roth, *op. cit.*, p. 322.

[3] Gilij, *Saggio di storia Americana*, ii. 133.

[4] v. Spix and v. Martius, *Reise in Brasilien*, i. 381.

[5] Crevaux, *Voyages dans l'Amérique du Sud*, p. 526.

[6] Nordenskiöld, *Indianer och hvita*, p. 167.

[7] Del Campana, *Notizie intorno ai Ciriguani* (*Archivio per l'antropologia e la etnologia*, 1902), p. 71.

[8] Bridges, *op. cit.*, p. 182. Bove, *Patagonia*, p. 133.

[9] de Lery, *Histoire d'un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil*, p. 297.

[10] Ehrenreich, *Beiträge zur Völkerkunde Brasiliens*, p. 29.

Patagonians the child shortly after birth was smeared over with damp gypsum.[1] Other tribes anoint the child with oil, blow upon it repeatedly, or fumigate it with tobacco.[2] Tobacco is commonly used by the Indians as an antidote against evil spirits. Similarly, the practice of enveloping the child in large swaddling-clothes is no doubt in most cases due to superstitious considerations. This is clearly indicated for instance by Garcilasso de la Vega when he says that the ancient Incas used to wash the child well and subsequently swathe it in cloth for three months, believing that if they released the arms before that time, they would grow feeble.[3] Among the Guarayús of Bolivia[4] and some tribes in Brazil[5] it is customary to tie black cotton cords round the arms and thighs and waist of the child, or to cover it with feathers or with collars of beads, teeth, and bones, ornaments which are nothing but amulets.

Similar precautions are taken with regard to the *mother*. That the woman is liable to suffer more or less at birth, and consequently—since every suffering is by the Indian ascribed to supernatural causes—is believed to be on that occasion especially exposed to the attacks of evil demons, is quite natural, and this belief, as a matter of fact, is universal in South America. Even during her regular periods the woman is always in a delicate condition, and supposed to be attacked by evil spirits. Still more, of course, is this the case when she is in childbed. The custom, prevailing among some tribes, to isolate the woman or send her away to be delivered outside the hut and village, has originated in the fear of the pollution she might carry to everything with which she comes in contact during her unclean condition. Thus, among the Araucanians, when a woman is in labour, she is taken out from the hut to the river, where she is delivered. For they say that the evils attached to the pregnant woman may pollute persons and things in the house where she is. For eight days she must be secluded, and no one must see her lest he should be affected by the evils of the birth.[6] In one word, the woman is what is generally called taboo. But it must be observed that this taboo-conception does not, as far as we can see, involve the idea of an impersonal magical influence, but has a purely animistic foundation: the woman is attacked by impure and harmful spirits, and all precautions at birth aim at averting these personified dangers.

---

[1] Musters, *At Home with the Patagonians*, p. 186.

[2] See, for instance, Gumilla, *El Orinoco ilustrado*, p. 64. v. Tschudi, *Perú*, ii. 235. Schomburgk, *op. cit.*, ii. 314. v. Spix and v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 381. v. Martius, *Beiträge zur Ethnographie Amerika's*, i. 423.

[3] Garcilasso de la Vega, *Comentarios reales*, bk. iv., c. 12.

[4] Cardús, *Las misiones franciscanas*, p. 74.

[5] Krause, *In den Wildnissen Brasiliens*, p. 239. v. d. Steinen, *Unter den Naturvölkern Central-Brasiliens*, p. 184. Ehrenreich, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

[6] Medina, *Los aborigenes de Chile*, p. 286.

The Indian woman, like the woman among uncivilized peoples in general, bears with great ease, without suffering much pain, and from the point of view of the savage it is of especial importance that this should be so. As the Choroti Indians explained it to me: if at the birth the woman is ill, this is due to her being possessed by an evil spirit, and the demon, owing to the close connection which exists between mother and child, will also penetrate into the latter, causing it to fall ill or die. Hence the sickness or weakness from which possibly she is suffering must be concealed and reasoned away. The Chorotis have a stereotype phrase to express this: *lasīhe ise lóuet=lahse īhe, eis lóuet*, " when the child is born, the woman is well." As a matter of fact, a few hours after the deliverance the Choroti woman is seen to move about doing some small business in the house, fetching water, preparing food, and so on; in short, she acts as if she were quite hearty, thus deceiving herself, her relatives, and the evil spirits. Meanwhile the husband lies in bed, looks weak, fasts, and is attended to by the women. The only precaution the woman shares with her husband seems to be to keep diet; like him she avoids meat, contenting herself with maize and certain fruits.

The custom which prescribes that a woman in childbed shall fast or keep diet for some time together with her husband appears to be almost universal among the Indians of South America. The ideas underlying fasting I shall account for later on.

We now come to what is generally regarded as the essence of the couvade, the rules of conduct imposed upon the *father* of the child. These rules, which direct him to lie in bed, to fast, or to pass through other ceremonies, strike us especially because they seem to have no foundation whatever in reality. We understand that the newborn child is delicate, that the mother is liable to suffer at birth, and that these facts are likely to give rise to superstitious beliefs, but we have some difficulty in understanding the apparent weakness and sickness of the father. Yet the practices of the male childbed are founded upon ideas quite natural to uncivilized man and very widely spread in lower culture.

Professor von den Steinen has given an account of the couvade among the tribes of the Rio Xingú in Brazil which is of great interest because it is one of the most thorough descriptions we have of the custom, and especially because it tries to assign the psychological, or perhaps rather physiological, reason for it, gathered from the Indians themselves. That reason he found in the fact, already referred to in the previous chapter, that according to their idea the *man* is the real bearer of the eggs which he introduces into the mother, and that the child is "the little father." The newborn babe, accordingly, is more intimately connected with its father than with its mother.[1] Professor von den Steinen, I believe, here points out the idea which lies at the root of the couvade among all uncivilized peoples who practise that custom. The Indian has so strong a consciousness of the significance of paternity that he even puts more into it than there really is. The actual process of conception is not realized by him. He does not know that the germ of the new being is in the woman herself, and that the man only fecundates it at the sexual act. He evidently believes that the seed itself springs from the man, and that the rôle of the woman is limited to receiving and developing it, just as the earth receives the seed which is sown into it, and in due time brings forth the full-grown fruits. The Bakaïri are not the only Brazilian tribe which is stated to hold such a view. Thus we are told about the Coroados that according to their opinion a child is exclusively indebted to its father for its existence, the mother only preserving and taking care of it.[2] The same Indian idea is clearly expressed by von Spix and von Martius, who, speaking of the birth-customs of the Mundrucús, say that the couvade among them arose from the idea these peoples entertained that the child is solely the father's, the mother's share in the bearing and bringing forth being likened unto that of the earth which in plant life simply receives the seed.[3] The same is pointed out by Southey, although he was only a writer at second-hand on the Brazilian Indians. "It was their opinion," he says, "that the child proceeds wholly from the father, receiving nutrition indeed and birth from the mother, but nothing more."[4] Sir Edward B. Tylor long ago quoted this statement of

---

[1] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 337. See *supra*, p. 423.

[2] Teschauer, "Die Caingang oder Coroados-Indianer im brasilianischen Staate Rio Grande do Sul," in *Anthropos*, ix. 22.

[3] v. Spix and v. Martius, *op. cit.*, iii. 1339. v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 392.

[4] Southey, *History of Brazil*, i. 218.

Southey,[1] adding another detail mentioned by the same writer, namely, that the ancient Tupis used to give their own women as wives to their male captives and then without scruple eat their children, holding them simply to be of the flesh and blood of their enemies.[2] He mentions this as the "most startling development" of the savage idea that parentage belongs to the father and not to the mother. But this idea is not limited to the Brazilian tribes, as may be inferred from the existence of similar practices in other parts of South America. Thus Cieza de León speaks of some Indians in ancient Peru who used to make slaves of their captives taken in war, marry them to their own female relatives or neighbours, and later on kill and eat the children resulting from these unions, as they grew up.[3] Again, among the Toba Indians of the Gran Chaco a man simply kills the offspring of his married daughter if his son-in-law has incurred his displeasure; and in all Chaco women always kill their newborn babes if they have been abandoned by their husbands, and, in general, when the father is unknown. Such customs no doubt assume the recognition of a very intimate relationship between the child and its father. The child is part and parcel of the father, or rather, *is* the father. Hence, if the woman is displeased with her husband and has broken all relations with him, she may likewise make away with the child born from him.

As Professor von den Steinen adds, it does not make any difference in this respect whether the child is a boy or a girl; even the girl is considered as the little father. In the Bakaïri language, as this traveller found, there did not exist special words for son and daughter; if it was necessary to point out the difference, a word indicating the sex was added.[4] Exactly the same I have myself found to be the case in Chaco: in the Choroti language a babe is called *jahse*, which means both a boy and a girl. The Tobas use the word *nätolic* in the same common sense. In case it is necessary to accentuate the sex a special word indicating it is added.

On the other hand, this theory of parentage must not be carried too far, and I think Southey somewhat exaggerates the facts when he says that the parentage is given *wholly* over to the father and that the mother is considered to have no share at all in it. There has probably never been a stage in the social evolution of mankind where this has been the case, and, as I have endeavoured to show, the rules prescribed by the couvade do not apply only to the man but also, although generally in a lesser degree, to the woman. It is true that the woman is regarded as the earth which is sown, which brings forth and nourishes; but as such her importance is sufficiently great not to be overlooked by the savage, who certainly knows from experience how essentially the thriving of the plant is dependent upon the soil from which it grows up.

---

[1] Tylor, *Early History of Mankind*, p. 299.

[2] Southey, *op. cit.*, i. 227, 248. This fact is first recorded by de Lery, *Histoire d'un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil*, p. 250.

[3] Cieza de León, *op. cit.*, c. 12. The same practice is mentioned by Oviedo y Valdés, *Sumario de la natural historia de las Indias*, c. 10 (*Biblioteca de autores Españoles*, tomo i. 482).

[4] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 337.

The facts pointed out, I think, will help us to explain what really has seemed inexplicable in the custom of couvade, the mysterious connection which is supposed to exist between the child and its father, and which is so intimate that everything that happens to the father affects the child, as if in reality it happened to the latter. This is what is generally called "sympathetic magic," or more strictly speaking, contagious magic. Its leading principle, well known from the psychology of primitive man, is that things which were once related to one another retain their connection after they are separated, and that by acting upon a part of a given whole we may influence the whole, and *vice versa*. But by establishing this fact we have not yet fully explained the couvade. It is necessary to examine more closely the nature of the "sympathy" which is supposed to exist between the father and his newborn offspring. Generally the error of sympathetic magic has been said to lie therein, that it assumes a real connection between things where there is only an ideal one, a connection in thought. This explanation may seem plausible when we look upon the matter from a civilized point of view. To the savage himself no doubt the "sympathy" uniting the part with the whole, or the image with the original, has a most real foundation, being, in many cases at least, due to the mediation of a spirit. Thus the idea of the savage, that he can influence a person at a distance if he possesses a piece of his clothes or a portion of his body, probably depends on the belief that the soul of that person is attached to certain parts of his body or to other things which have been in close contact with him. This is especially clear in the most familiar and typical example of magic sympathy, when a supernatural influence is exercised upon a person through his hair and nails, for in these parts of the body, as we have seen, the soul or spirit is concentrated.

In the same way, in the custom of couvade the sympathy between the father and the child appears to be due, not only to a physical identity or similarity, but also to an intimate contact between their souls. This is very clearly expressed in the information the Rev. C. D. Dance gives us about the male childbed among the Acawoio Indians of the Demerara district in Guiana. "The infant spirit," he says, "clings to the father, gazes upon him, follows him wherever he goes, and for the time being is as intimate and familiar with the father as he is with his own infant body with which the infant spirit is only recently associated. How, then, can the father go out to the forest or field to use an axe or cutlass, when the spirit of the child which follows him as a second shadow might be between the axe and the wood? How climb a tree, if the infant spirit is also to essay the climbing, and fall, perhaps to the injury of the infant lying in the hammock? How hunt, when the arrow might pierce the accompanying spirit of the child, which would be death to the little mortal at home? . . . When the father wades through the water, the toddling spirit of the wife's infant must paddle over in a *tairu*-leaf boat; and when his sire crosses over the stump, the little temporary bridge enables the infantile spirit to climb over. . . . Thus the spirit of the child follows its father to the fields and returns with him to the house to gambol between father and child, until age and some mysterious increasing sympathy attaches it exclusively to the body of the child whose spirit it is."[1]

This interesting statement is perfectly in accordance with what we made out in the previous chapter about the theory of generation held by the savage Indian. The soul of the infant has not come from the father; it has only accidentally, by the act of conception, been associated with him and with the new human being which he has begotten. But during the first time after birth, as long as the newborn is not yet a personality in the strict sense of the word, the infantile spirit seems to be somewhat uncertain whether it belongs to the body of the father or to the body of the offspring, being, therefore, obliged "to gambol between father and child until age and some mysterious increasing sympathy attaches it exclusively to the body of the child."

Of the Guarayús in Bolivia, Dr. Nordenskiöld states[2] that "when the wife has given birth to the child, her husband must lie in bed, for the soul of the child, *anhuér*, follows the father everywhere. If, for instance, he goes out in the forest and shoots a macaw parrot, he might shoot his own child." The same idea of an intimate connection between the father and the soul of his newborn offspring is familiar to the different tribes in eastern Ecuador, and the detailed rules of conduct which, for instance, among the Jibaros are observed after the birth of a child, and of which I shall presently give an account, must be wholly explained from this primitive view.

---

[1] Dance, *Chapters from a Guianese Log-book*, p. 249.

[2] Nordenskiöld, *Indianer och hvita*, p. 167.

All practices connected with the couvade which direct the father to restrict his diet and his daily vocations, to lie inactive in the bed, abstaining especially from going out hunting or fishing or, in general, from doing any hard work, from using sharp and cutting instruments, and so on, are founded on the religious or magical principles just mentioned. This Indian idea appears very clearly, for example, in the account Dobrizhoffer gives of the couvade of the Abipones. "No sooner you hear that the wife has borne a child," he says, "than you will see the Abipone husband lying in bed, huddled up with mats and skins, lest some ruder breath of air should touch him, fasting, kept in private, and for a number of days abstaining religiously from certain viands; you would swear that it was he who had had the child. . . ." When an Abipone chief, whose wife was just being confined, was offered a pinch of Spanish snuff, he refused it, contrary to custom, giving the following reason for the refusal: "Don't you know that my wife has just been confined? Must I not, therefore, abstain from stimulating my nostrils? What a danger my sneezing would bring upon my child!" No more, but he went back to his hut to lie down again directly, lest the tender little infant should take some harm if he stayed any longer in the open air. . . . "For they believe," Dobrizhoffer adds, "that the father's carelessness influences the newborn offspring, from a natural bond of sympathy of both. Hence, if the child comes to a premature end, its death is attributed by the women to the father's intemperance, this or that cause being assigned. He did not abstain from mead; he had loaded his stomach with waterhog; he had swum across the river when the air was chilly. . . he had devoured underground honey, stamping on the bees with his feet; he had ridden till he was tired and sweated," etc.[1]

Father Juan Rivero, who was the first to give an account of the custom of male childbed existing among the Indians of the Orinoco, just as Dobrizhoffer gave the first account of this custom from the Gran Chaco, adds that "as a reason for these superstitious practices and ridiculous ceremonies they assert that if during this time they should go walking, they would trample on the head of the infant; if they should chop wood, they would cleave the child's head; if they should shoot birds in the mountain, they would infallibly shoot the newly born,"[1] etc. Of the Indians of Guiana, Dr. Roth states that in many of the tribes the husband is during birth, and often for long afterwards, prohibited from engaging in certain of his ordinary occupations. The Pomeroon Arawak must neither smoke, lift any heavy weight, use a fish-hook, nor have intimate relations with any woman. The mainland Carib of Cayenne was not allowed to cut any big timber with an axe. Should these and similar prohibitions not be observed, some evil would be sure to befall the child.[2]

---

[1] Dobrizhoffer, *Geschichte der Abiponer*, ii. 273 *sqq.*

The Canelos Indians and the Jibaros of Ecuador do not practise a real male childbed, but the general Indian idea of a close and mysterious relationship existing between a newborn child and its parents, especially the father, has among them given rise to all sorts of regulations as to the diet and mode of life to be observed by the latter for some time after the birth of the child. Among the Canelos Indians the woman keeps in and abstains from doing work for three days after delivery. The father again must restrict his mode of life for eight days. He does not go out hunting in the forest, for if he shoots an animal or a bird with gun or blow-pipe, he may at the same time shoot his little son so that he dies. Nor does he undertake any work in the forest with his forest-knife, for if he did, he might kill his own son with the knife. Any iron instrument is taboo to him. He must not kill a venomous snake or a jaguar, or even expose himself to meeting such an animal, for otherwise his delicate offspring in the house might get frightened and die. Much the same rules exist among the Jibaros, but the father has to observe them, not for a few days, but for months or years.[3]

The above instances, gathered from tribes in different parts of South America, who cannot possibly be assumed to have borrowed their ideas from each other, may be sufficient to show that we are dealing with a practically general Indian view, the roots of which must be sought in certain primitive animistic and magical beliefs.

---

[1] Rivero, *Historia de las misiones de los llanos de Casanare y los rios Orinoco y Meta*, p. 347.

[2] Roth, *op. cit.*, p. 324. Cp. also Barrere, *Nouvelle relation de la France équinoxiale*, p. 223 *sq.*

[3] Karsten, *Contributions to the Sociology of the Indian Tribes of Ecuador* (*Acta Academiæ Aboënsis.* Humaniora, i: 3, 1920), pp. 61, 66.

Of special interest is the custom of *fasting*, because it is one of the duties which the parents are almost invariably subjected to, even where no other rules of conduct are imposed upon them. Restrictions in diet play an extremely important rôle in the social life of the Indians, but the ideas underlying this usage, as far as I know, have never been investigated more closely. How curiously fasting has been misunderstood when practised in connection with the couvade, appears from the theory of the German ethnologist W. Joest, who tries to make out that the father of the newborn child fasts simply because his wife, who wants to keep him with herself, does not allow him to go out hunting or fishing, and therefore there are no eatables in the house.[1] It is obvious that the restricted diet to which the parents of a newborn child are subjected is due to much the same ideas as ceremonial fasting on many other important occasions in the social life of the Indians. The main motive underlying this custom must, no doubt, be sought in fear lest with the food the Indian might possibly devour a spirit which is hidden there. From this again two consequences may ensue: either the evil spirit causes the person to fall ill and die, and this is evidently the more common idea; or the spirit of the animal, the flesh of which is eaten, might fill the person with the spiritual qualities of that animal, or even give him its physical characteristics. Thus, by eating the flesh of the jaguar the Indian believes he will become strong and ferocious like that wild beast; by eating the flesh of the ostrich he will become swift on foot like that bird, and so forth. Behind the numerous superstitions in regard to food there is, as usual, a certain amount of reality, and imagination does the rest. That, for instance, the eating of *meat* is especially considered fraught with danger is partly due to the natural knowledge, derived from experience, that flesh is really an indigestible, and in some cases, unwholesome food, but partly also to a superstitious belief widely spread among the Indians of South America, namely, that the spirits of the dead reincarnate themselves in various animals. In previous chapters I have given so numerous instances of this belief and its practical consequences, that it is not necessary to illustrate it with further examples.

---

[1] Joest, "Ethnographisches und Verwandtes aus Guiana," in *Intern. Arch. f. Ethnographie*, Bd. V. Supplement, Leyden, 1893, p. 98. It is strange that a modern ethnographer like Dr. Koch-Grünberg should admit this explanation, which now only has the interest of curiosity, to be right "to a certain extent." (*Vom Roroima zum Orinoco*, Bd. III. *Ethnographie*, p. 137.) Travellers of the last century generally did not understand the couvade at all, and Joest, for his own part, did his best to reason away the whole custom.

This being the case, we can understand why fasting is everywhere in South America practised on special occasions, critical or important from a primitive point of view, for instance after a death, after enemies have been slain, when men are initiated for chiefhood or priesthood, when boys or girls attain to the age of puberty, when a woman is in childbed, and so forth. In all these cases, when a person is believed to be especially exposed to evil spirits, he naturally has to take most care of himself, among other things abstaining from such kinds of food as may, for the reasons given, prove fatal to him.

From this point of view the regulations of diet imposed upon the parents of the newborn child can hardly surprise us. The little babe cannot eat meat and other indigestible things; it would die, and this the Indian would ascribe to the evil spirit that entered it with the unsuitable food. Now, according to the principles of sympathetic magic, exactly the same would happen if the father and the mother, who are intimately connected with their offspring, ate this food; it would be just the same as if the child itself ate it, and the effect would prove fatal to the little one. This is expressly stated in many accounts of the couvade from South America. Thus Professor von den Steinen says that the Bakaïri husband, during the couvade, had to live merely on a kind of light manioc-bread crumbled in water; any other food would do harm to the child. "*It would be just as if the child itself ate meat, fish, and fruit.*"[1] Among the Siusi in north-west Brazil, according to Dr. Koch-Grünberg, both of the parents have to abstain from doing any work for five days; they must not wash themselves and are allowed to eat only *beijú* (manioc-bread) and pepper. Any infringement of these rules would do harm to the newborn babe. When the five days have elapsed the father of the husband chants a long, monotonous song, enumerating all the fishes and animals of chase the flesh of which they are thenceforward allowed to eat.[2] This latter part of the statement is especially interesting, and is perfectly in accordance with what has been said above: the father, who enumerates the fishes and animals, is *conjuring* by his incantation the spirits that are incarnated in them, thus acquiring power over them and making them harmless as food. The Carib husband, according to de Rochefort, " s'abstient quelquefois dix mois, ou un an entier, de plusieurs viandes comme de lamantin, de tortuë, de pourceau, de poules, de poisson, et des choses delicates: craignant, par une pitoyable folie que cela ne nuise a l'enfant."[1] Of the Indians of Guiana in general Sir Everard F. im Thurn says that " if the father infringes any of the rules of couvade, for a time after the birth of the child, the latter suffers. . . . Apparently there is also some idea that for the father to eat strong food, to wash, to smoke, or to handle weapons would have the same result as if the newborn baby ate such food, washed, smoked, or played with edged tools."[2] From the same regard for the health of his child the father observes the rules of couvade among the Piapocos of Venezuela: " If he lies in bed and submits himself to diet," says Crevaux, " this is to prevent the infant from falling ill."[3] The Chorotis in the Gran Chaco expressly declared to me that " the father fasts because the child fasts "—that is, the father abstains from eating certain kinds of food because his delicate son cannot eat such food; if the father ate, for example, meat, it would be just as if his son ate meat, and the consequence would prove fatal to the latter. The Matacos say of both of the parents, *uenhitātāc, yil vúh,* " they do not eat, there are many demons of death " (moving about and threatening especially the child, but also the parents themselves). The same is the reason for the father's and the mother's fasting among the Chiriguanos.[4]

---

[1] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 335.

[2] Koch-Grünberg, *Zwei Jahre unter den Indianern*, i. 183.

In some cases, as already pointed out, the evil consequences of the father's or the mother's intemperance with regard to food seem to lie in the child being endowed with the physical faults or other characteristics of the animal eaten. Thus du Tertre says that the father abstained from eating fowl and fish because he believed " that this would injure the child's stomach, and that it would participate in the natural faults of the animals on which its father had fed. For example, if the father ate turtle, the child would be deaf and have no brains like this animal; if he ate manati, the child would have little round eyes like this creature, and so on."[1] The same is stated by Sir Everard F. im Thurn with regard to the Indians of British Guiana: "For instance, if he (the father) eats flesh of the water-haas (*capibara*), a large rodent with very protruding teeth, the teeth of the child will grow as those of that animal; if he eats the flesh of the spotted skinned labba, the child's skin will be spotted."[2] Likewise, among the Bolivian Guarayús the woman in childbed as well as her husband must abstain from eating the macaw-parrot, for otherwise the child will get a wry face; nor must they eat the head of a monkey or a wild pig, for then the child will be endowed with a face resembling that of these animals.[3] In such cases, no doubt, the evil influences exerted upon the child are ascribed to the spirit of the animal which is transmitted to the child through the food.

---

[1] de Rochefort, *op. cit.*, p. 551 *sq.*

[2] Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p. 218.

[3] Crevaux, *op. cit.*, p. 526.

[4] Del Campana, *op. cit.*, p. 71. Corrado, *El colegio franciscano de Tarija*, p. 51. As a matter of fact, among these Chiriguanos not only the father and the mother, but *all members of the family have to fast* (Del Campana, *loc. cit.*). The bond which unites the members of the primitive family and tribe is often so strong that physical or spiritual influences are easily transferred from one to another. Thus the Chiriguanos and the Tobas told me that if a newborn child dies from sickness, not only the parents but the whole tribe is likely to die away. The Tobas said that a child which dies from illness will be transformed into a demon which will rage among the people. To prevent this, the sick child is killed before it dies. This is one of the many cases where infanticide is practised from superstitious reasons. A similar mysterious " sympathy " there is between a chief and his people.

The investigations made by myself among the tribes of Ecuador throw an interesting light upon the mysterious influence which the food eaten by the parents, and more particularly by the father, is believed to exert upon the newborn child. Thus the Jibaro father, in addition to the other rules of precaution already mentioned by me, has to observe very detailed prescriptions with regard to his diet. He is, for instance, forbidden to eat certain birds and certain kinds of fish, and for quite peculiar reasons. Among others, he must abstain from eating the toucan, the woodpecker, the umbrella-bird, the cock-of-the-rock, the wild turkey, and the pigeon. Nor must he eat the intestines of any animals, hen's eggs, or fish roes. As to fish, two of the most common species are especially mentioned as prohibited food—namely, a large fish called *wámbi* and a kind of *Silurus* called *nápi*. This sort of food is particularly regarded as dangerous, but in their general diet the parents are extremely careful during the whole time that the child is suckled. Frequently, when I travelled in company with Jibaro Indians, I noticed their reluctance to eat certain kinds of animal or bird, certain kinds of fruit, etc., and when I inquired about the reasons for this I often received the answer: "I cannot eat it, for I have a sucking babe at home."

The particular prohibitions just mentioned depend on the following ideas. The toucan, the woodpecker, the umbrella-bird, and the cock-of-the-rock belong to those birds which, although they are normally eaten, are still regarded with superstition, because it is believed that they eventually serve as abodes or vehicles for the magic arrow (*tunchi*), which the sorcerers let off against persons whom they want to harm. By the parents eating these birds, therefore, the child may be bewitched, pine away, and die. Again, the wild turkey and the pigeon produce very loose fæces and are constantly making their necessaries as if they were suffering from diarrhœa. If the parents eat these birds, therefore, their offspring will likewise get diarrhœa—an illness to which small children are particularly exposed—and perhaps die. Similarly, the child would be likely to contract diarrhœa if the parents ate the intestines of animals, or hen's eggs. With regard to the latter also, the Jibaros have the peculiar superstition that the fæces of the child would get the same colour as the yellow of the egg, which would be the sign of some disease of the stomach. Again, if they eat fish roes, the child will get scrofula on the head, a disease pretty common with Indian children.

---

[1] du Tertre, *op. cit.*, ii. 371.

[2] Im Thurn, *op. cit.*, p. 218.

[3] Nordenskiöld, *Indianer och hvita*, p. 167.

The reason why the parents must not eat the fish *wámbi* is connected with the mythological ideas of the Jibaros. Anciently, when all animals had human shape, the *wámbi* was attacked and wounded by some of his enemies, while trying to escape from the lagoon where he lived. He was badly hit by a lance, but contrived to draw it out from the body and escaped. However, he lost much blood, so that he has still a red tail and red fins, being for the rest entirely white. Now, if the parents eat the fish *wámbi*, their delicate child will likewise lose blood, become anæmic, and die. Again, that they abstain from eating the other fish, *nápi*, is due to considerations of a different kind. Since this large fish is extremely restless and violent, the consequence would be, in case that the parents ate it, that their babe would be tired out and not get the rest necessary for a newborn child.

The father, with his newborn child, according to the idea of these Indians, forms, as it were, one single personality. The soul of the latter is intimately associated with the father's own, and everything that happens to the father during the critical days is supposed directly to affect his tender son.[1]

The very peculiar ideas underlying the dietary rules of the Jibaros may serve as an evidence that it is by no means always possible to explain the customs of savage peoples from one and the same general principle; detailed inquiries are often necessary in order to understand them. They moreover show how essential it is to know the *reasons* why savages practise certain customs, and of which they are, no doubt, in most cases fully conscious. Who could divine, for instance, why the Jibaros abstain from eating pigeons and the fish *wámbi* after the birth of a child, unless the reasons were told by the Indians observing this rule of abstinence?

---

[1] Karsten, *Contributions to the Sociology of the Indian Tribes of Ecuador* (*op. cit.*), p. 64 *sqq*. Cp. p. 60 *sq*.

Professor von den Steinen mentions as a startling fact, illustrating the intimate sympathy which is supposed to exist between the father and his newborn child, that the Bakaïri father himself took the medicine intended for his sick son, believing that thus it would benefit the latter.[1] This is by no means a practice exceptional to the Bakaïri. Thus among the Canelos Indians in Ecuador both the father and the mother of a newborn child have to take a whole series of medicines, which are believed to have beneficial effects, not so much upon the parents themselves, as upon their offspring. The woman on the day of delivery has to take a drink prepared from the rind of a bush called *tsigta.* This remedy is supposed to have fortifying effects both upon the childbed woman herself and upon her babe. Again, the father of the newborn has to take several magical medicines which are believed to exert a favourable influence upon the latter. The rind of a tree called *tsinsála* is scraped off with a knife and soaked in water, and the drink is taken by the father in the afternoon after the child is born. This medicine will have the effect of composing and fortifying the child. In the same evening the father takes some leaves of a tree or bush called *sinchi caspi* (" the tree of strength "), which he chews and swallows crude. Lastly, in the following morning the root of the same bush is taken, crushed and boiled in water, and the decoction is drunk by the father. The *sinchi caspi* is supposed to give much strength to the newborn babe.

Whereas at Canelos also the parents abstain from eating certain kinds of animal, bird, and fish for some time after the birth of their child, and for similar superstitious reasons, as among the Jibaros, they are on the other hand recommended to eat a worm or larva called *túku,* living in the top of certain palms. The larva is very fat, and will therefore have the effect of making the child fat by the parents eating it.[2]

Although the general rule is that dietetic want of caution on the part of the parents badly affects the health of their offspring, there seems also to be the idea that they might do harm to themselves as well. With regard to the mother, who really is in a delicate condition, this is quite natural. Thus we hear that if a Chiriguano woman, whose food during the critical days is limited to maize-bread and water, infringes the rules of diet, she will get rheumatic pains in the whole body.[1] More surprising it is to hear the same of the father. But so great is the power of imagination that the father, who is thoroughly convinced that his own state of health is intimately bound up with that of his offspring, really seems to be himself, during the critical time, weak and delicate like the child. A striking instance of this we find in the case of the Chiriguano chief Taco, who said he owed his great stomach to the fact that he had neglected the rules of couvade. "For five days," he said, "I ought to have lain in bed keeping diet."[2] In some cases it is even reported that the father pretends really to be ill and feigns labour-pains. The clearest record of this we have from California. "Among the Central Californians," says H. H. Bancroft, quoting some ancient writers, "when childbirth overtakes the wife, the husband puts himself to bed and there, grunting and groaning, he affects to suffer all the agonies of a woman in labour."[3] In so far as this is really correct we may take the explanation to be that the father, by feigning the labour-pains, tries to divert the attention of the supernatural molesters from his wife, the person who is actually likely to suffer. But such statements are perhaps in most cases due to misunderstanding or malobservation. This is for instance pointed out by Crevaux with special reference to the birth-customs of the Piapocos in Venezuela: "On a dit que le mari simulait les douleurs de l'enfantement. Chez les Piapocos le fait n'est pas exact. S'il se couche et s'il se soumet a la diète, il n'a d'autre but que d'empêcher son enfant de tomber malade."[4] At any rate the belief of the Indian is that if the father *really* falls ill during the days of the couvade, this must needs influence the condition of his child, who will also fall ill.

---

[1] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 338.

[2] Karsten, *Contributions to the Sociology of the Indian Tribes of Ecuador* (*op. cit.*), p 59 *sqq.*

There are some other practices connected with the couvade which show both the delicacy of the father and the close sympathy between him and his offspring. First of all, attention may be called to the passage in du Tertre's and de Rochefort's statements on the male childbed among the Caribs where the bleeding of the father is mentioned. "When the days fixed for the fasting have elapsed," says du Tertre, "they invite their relations and best friends who, being arrived, before they sit to eat, cut up the skin of this poor wretch with agouti teeth and draw blood from all parts of his body, in such sort that from being sick by pure imagination they often make a real patient of him."[1] Likewise among the Bolivian Guarayús the father who lay in couvade used to scarify himself, paint his body black, and fast for three days.[2] The custom of making incisions in the skin and drawing blood, which in South America especially occurs as a mourning ceremony, has been dealt with before. As we have seen, all bleeding practices are essentially rites of purification by which the organism is rid of impure matters personified into evil spirits. That not only the childbed woman herself, but also the father lying in couvade is regarded as unclean, is in some cases expressly stated. Thus of the Wapisiana and Makusi Indians of Guiana, among whom both parents take to bed after the birth of a child, Dr. Roth relates that "during the lying-in of the mother or couvade of the father they are considered equally unclean, such uncleanness being occasionally regarded as persisting for long afterwards."[3] Now according to the principles of couvade, by purifying the father in the said way, his little son is likewise purified. That we are dealing with a ceremony of purification or disinfection is also plainly set forth by du Tertre. This writer goes on to state that after the operation with agouti teeth "they take sixty or eighty large grains of pimento or Indian pepper, the strongest they can get, and after well mashing it in water they wash with this peppery infusion the wounds and scars of the poor fellow who, I believe, suffers no less than if he were burnt alive."[4] The custom of rubbing certain strong herbs into the blood of patients plays an important part in the practical religion and medicine of the Indians, and we have already met it when dealing with tattooing. As to the real meaning of this practice there cannot be much doubt when we know what virtues are commonly ascribed to magical plants and spices like tobacco, coca, and pepper, and which makes them efficacious antidotes against evil spirits. At the same time the operation mentioned has importance as a means of hardening the child, for we are expressly told that the father has to endure it without showing any signs of pain, and that the more endurance he shows, the braver a man his son will become.[5]

---

[1] Del Campana, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

[2] Nordenskiöld, *Indianerleben*, p. 206.

[3] Bancroft, *op. cit.*, i. 391.

[4] Crevaux, *op. cit.*, p. 526.

[1] du Tertre, *op. cit.*, ii. 371.
[2] Cardús, *op. cit.*, p. 74.
[3] Roth, *op. cit.*, p. 322.
[4] du Tertre, *loc. cit.*
[5] de Rochefort, *op. cit.*, p. 551.

Moreover, the idea that the blood is the seat of life and strength has given rise to another couvade custom which occurs at least among the Caribs in the Antilles and the Indians in Guiana: the blood drawn from the father is rubbed into the body of the child to give it strength. On this point de Rochefort says: "Il ne faut pas laisser tomber à terre ce noble sang, dont l'effusion fait ainsi germer le courage. Aussi le recueillent ils en diligence, pour en frotter le visage de l'enfant, estimant que cela sert encore beaucoup à le rendre généreux."[1] The same is reported of the Indians in British Guiana by the Rev. C. D. Dance: "In some cases," he says, "the father, when his child is weakly, gets his own flesh cut in close parallel lines; the blood flowing from the wound is mixed with water for washing and strengthening the child." In a foot-note the same writer adds that "they have a great faith in the curative property of extraneous blood absorbed into the system. An Indian when suffering from poverty of blood told me that he could not get better until he had cut himself and rubbed sheep's blood into the wound."[2]

A detail in reference to the couvade among the same Indians, which has greatly puzzled some writers, is the following: The father, whilst being confined, must not scratch himself with his finger nails, but he may use for this purpose a splinter specially provided from the midrib of the cokerite palm.[3] This superstition cannot be understood unless we know the superstitious beliefs held by the Indians with regard to nails in general. The nails, like the hair, as already pointed out, are considered to be the seat of a man's soul, or concentrations of his spirit; but at the same time, or perhaps rather for this very reason, they are considered to be critical parts to which the evil spirits particularly attach themselves. This belief, in the case in question, naturally has some foundation in the fact that dirty nails with which the skin is scratched really might become the source of dangerous infection. If the father scratches himself with his nail, it is just the same as if he scratched his child, and the evil spirit will enter the latter. It is also stated that an infringement of the rule mentioned will have the consequence of bringing lifelong sickliness upon the child.[4] The correctness of this explanation could be corroborated by many similar superstitions relating to certain parts of the body.

We have furthermore to consider the question concerning the duration of the couvade. As appears from many of the above statements, the couvade proper is limited to the first days after the birth of the child; as a matter of fact, five to ten days seems to be the general rule among the South American Indians. Sometimes, although seldom, certain rules, especially with regard to diet, have to be observed for a long time after the birth, the restrictions being most rigorous in the beginning and relaxing gradually as the child grows. Thus du Tertre, in the passage often referred to above, says that the Caribs had to observe a strict couvade for ten days, abstaining entirely from food. These ten days passed, they began to eat cassava only and drink *oüycou* for a whole month; birds and fish they were not allowed to eat until after the lapse of six months.[1] The Jibaros, although they have not a real male childbed, deem it very important to observe certain rules in regard to their diet and mode of life, but the situation, according to their opinion, remains critical for the little newborn not only during a few days, but for months and even years, or, more strictly speaking, as long as the child is suckled. The Indian women suckle their children for a far longer time than is customary among civilized peoples, often for two or three years, or still longer. If the parents fast well during these years, strictly keeping the rules prescribed by custom in other respects also, the child will develop rapidly, get healthy, vigorous, and robust. When the fasting ends, the parents make a special feast for the little one (" the feast of the children "), at which a medicine prepared from a magical plant is ceremonially given it by an old man or woman. With this feast the first period of the education of the child ends. Should the parents neglect all these rules, should they not fast well and make no feast, the result would be that the child would not grow and develop well, but soon pine away and die.

---

[1] de Rochefort, *loc. cit.*

[2] Dance, *op. cit.*, p. 250.

[3] Schomburgk, *op. cit.*, ii. 314. Im Thurn, *op. cit.*, p. 218.

[4] Schomburgk, *loc. cit.*

Where a real couvade exists it is, however, as we have seen, of short duration. The fact that during the first days the connection or sympathy between the parents and their offspring is considered most intimate, has its natural explanation in certain physiological facts. When, among the Tobas, I asked the father of a newborn child why the first days following the birth are so critical he pointed at the *navel* of his son, meaning to say that as soon as this was all right, the danger was past. The same idea is held by the Chorotis. Moreover, we have statements to the same effect from several other parts of South America. Dr. Roth, trying to explain the couvade among the Guiana Indians, states that " its (the child's) material dependence on the father ceases only when the navel-string is finally detached, the signal for the male parent to conclude his 'hatching' or couvade."[1] Of the Xingú tribes, Professor von den Steinen says that " the father cuts through the navel-string of the newborn, fasts rigorously . . . and is again a free man when the rest of the navel-string falls off."[2] How old this idea is, at least in Brazil, appears from the fact that it prevailed among the ancient Tupis.[3] Laet, speaking of the ancient Brazilians in general, says that after the birth of the child the father and mother fasted " until the navel had healed and sometimes up to the eighth day."[4] The same is related, for instance, of the Indian tribes of the Orinoco,[5] and of the Cainguá, a Guarani tribe on the Upper Paraná.[6]

---

[1] du Tertre, *loc. cit.*

The superstition as to the navel of the newborn child is thus reported from different parts of South America and is perhaps universal among the tribes of that continent. The reason of this is not difficult to find: *the navel-wound of the child may really become a dangerous source of infection.* The idea of the Indians, at least in Chaco, appears to be that the evil spirits may enter the delicate child through the navel, making it fall sick and die. As to the string itself there are curious superstitions. According to an idea spread all over South America, the umbilical cord must not be cut with a knife or any other iron instrument, but with a bamboo knife or a snail's shell. If it is cut with an iron instrument, it is believed the child will die. The iron, which was unknown to the Indians until the white man arrived, is still looked upon with superstitious fear by tribes unaffected by European civilization. Moreover, among most tribes in South America the navel-stump is guarded with great care, at least during the first critical days. The Chorotis in Chaco, for instance, told me that if the stump is thrown away before the wound is perfectly healed, this is the same as throwing away the child's life; the little one is bound to die. The Indian idea as to the navel-string is, I think, best illustrated by comparing it with the root of a tree; to throw away the string before the navel is healed—that is, before the child can be considered as a being having independent existence—is the same thing as to cut off the root of a tree. The child's connection with its mother is, during the first time of its existence, equally intimate as the tree's connection with the earth from which it grows up. This idea appears very clearly from a statement of Garcilasso de la Vega relating to the ancient Incas. When they cut through the navel-string of the child, he says, they used to leave a stump which, when it fell off, was kept with great care, and if the child grew sickly they allowed it to suck at this stump to recover strength.[1] The Indian realizes the fact that the vital functions of the child are at first intimately bound up with those of the mother, being mediated through the navel-string; and the sympathetic connection continues even after they have been separated.

---

[1] Roth, *op. cit.*, p. 324. Cp. Schomburgk, *op. cit.*, ii. 319.

[2] v. d. Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 336.

[3] Southey, *History of Brazil*, i. 238.

[4] de Laet, *Novus Orbis*, p. 544. The same is reported of the Passé Indians in Brazil by v. Martius, *op. cit.*, i. 511.

[5] Gilij, *Saggio di storia Americana*, ii. 133.

[6] Ambrosetti, *Los Indios Caingua del alto Paraná*, p. 32.

It is thus clear that the couvade is limited to the first days after the birth of the child simply because the latter is then most delicate, and believed to stand in the most intimate physical connection with the parents. These are released from the restrictions laid upon them by the custom as soon as the child has passed through the most critical stage, especially with regard to the navel-wound, and the physical connection between it and the parents is considered looser.

One point may still require a few words of explanation. Supposing that the Indian father diets and observes other rules of precaution in the belief that his own physical state and conduct has an immediate effect upon the state of his newborn offspring, we may still ask why his lying-in or "hatching" should be considered necessary. Of course, the name of "hatching" (couvade)—originally used for this birth-custom by the peasants in south-western Europe—is not very aptly chosen and gives no idea about its true meaning. But the natural answer to the question just made is that, according to a common primitive belief, *man may*, on a critical occasion, *evade supernatural enemies by lying hidden and keeping silence*. This ceremony—if so we may call it—is, in South America, not only practised in connection with the couvade, but on other occasions also. The same precaution is, for example, almost invariably taken with a girl when she reaches sexual maturity and has her first menstruation: she is usually shut up in a corner of the house, fasts, and must not speak. Similarly, the Avas or Chiriguanos, who believed that the spirits of the dead, called *aña*, came in great numbers to their drinking-feasts, used to drink for some two hours, *keeping silence*, whereupon they suddenly stood up and started to dance, no doubt to conjure the spirits.[1] Warriors, after the slaying of an enemy, are often bound to seclusion and fasting. Thus among the Jibaros, the slayer, after he has returned home from the war expedition, must live as retired and hidden a life as possible, since in this way he may more easily escape his supernatural enemy. For the same reason he abstains from taking part in religious feasts, and from wearing body-paintings, ear-tubes, necklaces, and other magical ornaments used by those who enter into relation with the spirits, and through which the latter, as it were, are challenged. More significant still is the custom which was practised by the Tupi warrior after the execution of a captive, a custom already referred to in previous chapters. The executioner had to lay himself down in his hammock where he passed the time shooting into wax with a small bow and arrows; he, moreover, made incisions on his body, and was obliged to fast.[2] This ceremony, of course, had nothing to do with a couvade, but the external similarity between the lying-in of the Tupi warrior and the "hatching" of the Indian father is obvious. In fact, both of them were greatly in danger of supernatural enemies and tried to escape them by the same simple precautions, seclusion, fasting, etc.[3]

---

[1] Garcilasso de la Vega, *Comentarios reales*, bk. ii., c. 24.

From the inquiries carried out in the previous pages it appears that the custom of couvade is based upon several ideas characteristic of a primitive intellect. These ideas are, in fact, so deep-rooted in the Indian mind that, as pointed out in the beginning of this chapter, we cannot doubt their having been more or less familiar to all South American peoples at a certain stage of their social development. Still less can the question be seriously considered as to whether the custom of couvade has, perhaps, been originally brought to the South American natives from Asia or from some other quarter of the globe.[1] To doubt the originality of the couvade in South America can occur only to writers who have not penetrated to the root of the custom, and are therefore inclined to see something of a deliberate " invention " or " fiction " in it. From this point of view most of the previous attempts to solve this sociological problem are only of little interest.

---

[1] Corrado, *op. cit.*, p. 43. Karsten, *Indian Dances in the Gran Chaco* (*Öfversigt af Finska Vetenskaps-Societetens Handlingar*), p. 23.

[2] For references, see *supra*, pp. 96, 160, note 5.

[3] Starting from the interpretation Dr. Friederici has given of the above-mentioned custom of the Tupis (Friederici, "Uber eine als Couvade gedeutete Wiedergeburtszeremonie bei den Tupi," in *Globus*, Bd. LXXXIX., 1906, p. 59 *sqq.*), Professor Josselin de Jong has, in an essay on the couvade, tried to show that this custom, among other things, is based on the idea of a rebirth. By pretending to be a newborn child the Indian father is trying to deceive the evil spirits, just as the Tupi warrior was trying to escape the attacks of the spirit of the slain enemy by acting the part of a newborn infant. (Josselin de Jong, "De Couvade," in *Mededeelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen.* Afdeeling Letterkunde, Deel 54, Serie B, No. 4, p. 24 *sqq.*) But Professor Josselin de Jong's theory breaks down in view of the fact that the Tupi ceremonies in question were not connected with any ideas of rebirth. Dr. Friederici's own explanation of this custom is as erroneous as the theory combated by him, that it was a couvade rite. The real significance of the Tupi ceremonies is quite clear, and I beg to refer to the interpretation I have given of them above, p. 160, note 5. Professor Josselin's explanation of the couvade as being a ceremony of pretended rebirth, as far as I can see, has no foundation in facts, and we must reject an hypothesis which only makes a primitive custom more complicated than it really is.

The first theory as to the significance of the couvade was, I believe, presented by Bachofen in 1861, in his well-known book on mother-right,[2] a theory which, among other sociologists, is also held by Sir Edward B. Tylor. These writers consider it to belong to the turning-point of society when the tie of parentage, till then recognized in maternity, was extended to take in paternity, this being done by the fiction of representing the father as a second mother. They point out that among certain tribes the couvade is the legal form by which the father recognizes the child as his, just as in the classical world certain symbolic pretences of birth were performed as rites of adoption. Thus the couvade, says Tylor, is " not merely incidentally an indicator of the tendency of society from maternal to paternal, but the very sign and record of that change."[3]

Against this theory, however, it must be objected that historically we know nothing of such a " turning-point " in the social evolution of mankind. The old theory of a universal early stage of mother-right which has preceded father-right is not supported by ethnological facts and is losing ever more ground among modern anthropologists. In regard to now existing savage tribes also it seems to me that the distinction between what is generally called a maternal and a paternal line of descent has been much exaggerated, at least as far as the American Indians are concerned. " Mother-right," far from being necessarily an original system of descent, has probably among many tribes arisen later, owing to particular cultural conditions. Dr. Westermarck points out that mother-right is apparently in various cases the result of matrilocal marriage, and matrilocal marriage, again, is undoubtedly due to the unwillingness of the woman's family to part with any of its members.[1] This theory, it seems to me, is particularly confirmed by the social conditions of the Chaco tribes, many of whom have matrilineal descent. The said distinction, in fact, is not an absolute, but only a relative one: even so-called maternal peoples are certainly aware of the father's great rôle at procreation; and *vice versa*, so-called paternal peoples also recognize the importance of the mother as being the soil which brings forth and nourishes the offspring. And the fact that the couvade in South America exists among purely matriarchal tribes like the Arawaks in Guiana and the Chorotis in Chaco—tribes among whom, according to the theory in question, it ought not to exist at all—furthermore shows that this custom has essentially nothing to do with prevailing systems of mother- or father-right.

---

[1] See Ploss, *Das Kind im Brauch und Sitte der Völker*, i. 211.

[2] Bachofen, *Das Mutterrecht*, pp. 17, 255 *sq*.

[3] E. B. Tylor, in Ling Roth, " On the Significance of Couvade," in *Journ. Anthrop. Inst.*, vol. xxii., 1893, p. 226.

Apart from this sociological explanation, Bachofen declares the man's childbed to be simply an *imitation* of the childbed of his wife. This imitation-theory is also adhered to by Dr. Kunike, who, moreover, says that the couvade was originally *invented* by the women, who wanted to keep their husbands with them during these days and to bring their duties towards wife and child strongly to their consciousness, etc.[2] But these explanations involve so complete a misunderstanding of the real facts that it is not necessary to deal with them at length.

Mr. Ling Roth, again, in his article on the couvade, desists from a detailed explanation and shortly declares the custom to be sympathetic magic.[3] This is also set forth by some other writers,[4] and, as I have tried to show above, such ideas are actually to be found in this custom. But an intricate sociological problem like the couvade cannot be solved with any single catch-word, be it this or that, and general summarizing explanations are of little use. Only a detailed examination, which takes all primitive religious and magical ideas relating to birth, maternity, and paternity into account, can throw light upon it.

---

[1] Westermarck, *The History of Human Marriage*, i. 296 *sq*. Starcke, *Primitive Family*, p. 79 *sq*.

[2] Kunike, *op. cit.*, p. 556. Joest likewise declares that the couvade is " von den Frauen erfunden und eingeführt," but, on the whole, goes still further on in misinterpreting the custom. See Joest, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-98.

[3] Ling Roth, *op. cit.*, pp. 235, 237, etc.

[4] See especially Hartland, *The Legend of Perseus*, ii. 400-411, and Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy*, iv. 244-255.

To get a right understanding of the primitive Indian view which we meet in studying the custom of couvade, we must, moreover, observe that the Indian not only assumes an intimate connection or sympathy between himself and his newborn child; a similar mysterious " sympathy " is believed more or less closely to unite him with any object which is the result of his work. This peculiar idea appears in a very striking way in certain customs of the Ecuadorian tribes visited by me, but it can hardly be limited to them. Thus—to mention a few instances—when the Jibaro Indian has bought a little dog which he proposes to breed for hunting, both he and his wife start to fast and submit themselves to certain other rules in their mode of life of much the same nature as those observed when a child is born. The dieting goes on for a couple of years, or until the young dog is full-grown, when an initiatory feast is made for him. The kind of food which the little dog cannot eat is also denied his masters. The latter, for instance, must abstain from eating a kind of sweet potatoes cultivated by the Jibaros, called *kingi*, the stalk of which has the form of a vine, for if they eat them the legs of the dog will become crooked like this vine. If the masters infringe the rules of diet or do not perform the ceremonies of the feast in the due form, the dog will become useless for hunting. In the same way, while the Jibaro Indian is making his big signal drum, the *tundui*, he has to diet, for if he loads his stomach with food and manioc-beer, the drum will be dull and not sonorous. For similar reasons he must diet while he is making a shield, a blow-pipe for the poisoned arrows, or a canoe. Moreover, both the Jibaros and the Canelos Indians deem it necessary to diet after they have planted or sown manioc, maize, earth-nuts, beans, and some other important cereals and plants. The women, after they have sown earth-nuts, among other things are not allowed to eat the flesh of the howling-monkey and of the squirrel. The reason appeared to be, that the fell of the howling-monkey and the squirrel is reddish-yellow, as if it had been burnt by the sun. If the women eat the flesh of these animals immediately after they have sown earth-nuts, the sowing will soon get the same reddish-yellow colour—that is, it will be burnt by the sun and dry away.[1]

Anthropologists will explain these peculiar ideas and customs simply on the principles of sympathetic magic. Certain it is that, according to a belief deeply rooted in the minds of these Indians, there exists such an intimate relation between a man and the work he is doing or has just done, that his own properties, both the essential and habitual ones and those occasionally acquired—by eating a certain food or in other ways—may literally be transferred to the object or result of his work. A man, in the most real sense of the word, puts something of his soul into the work he is doing, the effects of this transference making themselves felt even for some time after it has been finished. But if, starting from such ideas, the Indian restricts his diet and his mode of life while he is breeding a dog or making a drum, or after he has sown his fields, how much more scrupulously should he observe these rules after a son has been born to him, with whom he believes himself to be united with so strong physical and spiritual bonds ?

---

[1] For more instances, see Karsten, *Contributions to the Sociology of the Indian Tribes of Ecuador* (*op. cit.*), pp. 46 *sq.*, 29 *sqq.*

CHAPTER XV

THE CONCEPTION OF TABOO

THE terms taboo and *mana* have frequently been used by me in this work to denote the Indian belief in a mysterious supernatural power or influence. In numerous cases I have, moreover, been able to show that this power is closely connected with the animistic ideas of the Indians. The present, as well as the following and last chapter of my work, will be devoted to a more systematic statement of the results reached by me with regard to these fundamental notions in primitive religion. The conception of taboo, with which I am concerned in this chapter, will furthermore be illustrated with some rites and ceremonies which show how religious and magical beliefs have come to influence the morality and institutions of savage and barbaric peoples.

Tabu, as we know, is a Polynesian word which—like the kindred term *mana*—has been transformed into a category of world-wide application. As a matter of fact, although, for instance, in South America there seem to be no linguistic equivalents for the concepts *tabu* and *mana*, there is no doubt that the corresponding notions exist. Thus both persons and things may be "tabooed"—that is, pervaded by a mysterious quality, holiness, magical virtue, or what we like to call it, which is apt to render any contact with that person or thing dangerous. The question, however, is: What is the true nature of this dangerous power or influence? Sir James G. Frazer explains taboo from the general system of sympathetic magic which, as he points out, is not merely composed of positive precepts; it also comprises a large number of negative precepts, that is, prohibitions. It tells the savage not merely what he has to do, but also what he has to leave undone. The positive precepts are charms; the negative precepts are taboos. The whole doctrine of taboo, in fact, would seem to be only a special application of sympathetic magic with its two great laws of similarity and contact.[1] In later editions of his main work[2]

---

[1] Frazer, *Lectures on the Early History of Kingship*, p. 52.

[2] Frazer, *The Magic Art* (*The Golden Bough.* Third ed.), i. 174. Idem, *Balder the Beautiful*, i. 6, etc.

Sir J. G. Frazer has assumed not only a logical, but also a physical basis for sympathetic magic, without, however, defining more closely the nature of the "material medium" which, according to him, is believed to unite distant objects. Similarly, Dr. Marett has rightly pointed out the intimate connection which there is between taboo and *mana*, trying to show that taboo "is the negative mode of the supernatural to which *mana* corresponds as the positive mode."[1] But his dogmatic tendency to refer both notions to a pre-animistic stage in the evolution of religion exposes his whole theory to serious objections. The same view has been expressed by Dr. Farnell. Whilst recognizing that taboo is in its nature a sort of impurity to which a baneful influence is ascribed, he holds that in the primeval stage of thought this baneful influence was supposed to work unassisted by any spiritual agency such as spirit or god. Later, when the doctrine of animism became firmly established, it attracted the ritual and the ideas associated with it. A dangerous spirit was supposed to abide in the impure thing and to be evoked by the unclean act; the potency which, in the primeval stage of feeling, had been perhaps regarded merely as something mysteriously baneful and "uncanny, now becomes personal and intelligible, and can be exorcised by certain efficacious rules."[2]

Whether such a distinction between an earlier non-animistic and a later animistic stage in the evolution of the conception of taboo can really be made is a difficult question which I shall not consider at present. Here again my task is, in the first place, to investigate what beliefs are actually held by the Indians—not the beliefs which they have possibly held in "primeval" times. The view that the essence of taboo is impurity—conceived in a magical way—is, I think, perfectly confirmed by the ideas prevailing among the South American Indians. The chief sources of all impurity, and consequently of taboo, seem to be *death* and its most common cause, *disease*, but both of them, as we shall presently find, are conceived in an animistic way. There is nothing the Indian shuns to such extent as the demons which are believed to cause disease, and the contagion of death which is likewise personified. The patient himself is taboo, just as also his clothes, the food which he eats, and the plates from which he eats it, the bed in which he lies, and the whole house in which he lives. Anybody who comes in contact with these things is likely to become himself tainted with the disease. In order to get a right understanding of the nature of this contagion, we must know the theory of disease held by the savage Indian. The beliefs which I found prevailing among the wild Jibaros in eastern Ecuador are no doubt typical in this respect. These Indians make a definite distinction between what they call *tunchi*, " witchcraft," on the one hand, and " disease " in the proper sense of the word, called *súngura*, on the other. Sudden illnesses, accompanied by intensive pains, are generally set down to witchcraft, and this evil is, as a rule, sent by a malicious human sorcerer. On the other hand, to the category " disease " various illnesses are referred, which are not particularly connected with pains, especially fevers. But these Indians furthermore distinguish between two main classes of disease; the worst diseases are those which have been imported by the whites, and which consist in fever and infectious maladies like smallpox, dysentery, and venereal diseases, of which the first mentioned has at times made terrible ravages among the natives of South America. The second kind of *súngura* is endemic among the Indians, and is supposed to arise directly from their own evil spirits (*iguanchi*). But even the kind of *súngura* which proceeds from the whites is, in Indian belief, caused by a spirit, namely, the spirit of a white man. The Jibaros, however, can give no more particulars about the nature of this disease-spirit and death-spirit, and they know no other way of protecting themselves against his visits than that of trying to avoid him. Thus, when an epidemic of smallpox breaks out in an Indian village, the inhabitants are in the habit of abandoning the whole place, at least for some time. Under such circumstances it is easy to understand the anxiety with which the Indians, when a strange white man arrives, always ask whether he " brings disease." Both in his own person and in his clothes, and the other mysterious things which he brings with himself, the strange guest is supposed to carry germs of dangerous disease. My eating and drinking plates and cups were especially regarded as taboo, and at the first time of my staying among the Jibaros at least no one of the women would on any account have eaten from my plates or drunk from a cup. Disease and death was believed to be the probable consequence of such a carelessness.[1]

---

[1] Marett, *The Threshold of Religion*, p. 127.

[2] Farnell, *The Evolution of Religion*, p. 102 *sqq.*

The half-civilized Indians of Canelos make exactly the same distinction between witchcraft, which they call *chunta* (magic arrow) or *nanai* (" pain," " evil," caused by the arrow), and epidemic disease,

---

[1] Karsten, *The Religion of the Jibaro Indians of Eastern Ecuador*, p. 24 *sqq.* Idem, *Bland indianer i Ecuadors urskogar*, ii. 238.

ungüi (especially smallpox and dysentery), introduced by the whites. As to the latter, the *ungüi*, the Canelos Indians have much more realistic ideas than the Jibaros. "Disease," they say, enters into their villages in the shape of a white man, "wearing a bag on his shoulders." He may be a real man or only a spirit; in any case he is believed to bring illness. "Disease" knocks at the door of an Indian hut, and when someone goes to open it for him, the spirit will "catch" him (*Ungüi hapin*). One Indian, having thus been caught, the relentless strange demon will look for more victims among the rest. Hence, when in one way or another the Indians have got the idea that "Disease" is approaching their village—for instance, when a party of white men are arriving—the women start loudly to cry and lament just as they do when mourning for a dead person. In this way, they believe, "Disease" will be frightened away, or at any rate induced to retrace his steps, and leave the inhabitants in peace. This idea explains the strange welcome, consisting in ceremonial wailing and lamentation, which white travellers sometimes receive when arriving at Indian villages. Again, when a contagious disease—for instance, an epidemic of smallpox—breaks out in a place, the inhabitants generally see no other way of ridding themselves of the unwelcome guest than by leaving their village and emigrating to another part of the country. In such cases they are in the habit of blocking up the path along which they go with sticks and tree branches, "in order that the disease-spirit may not be able to follow in their footsteps."

We have reason to assume that similar ideas are held by most savage and half-civilized Indians in South America. There are different kinds of disease, but in whatever form illness occurs, there is always a spirit or demon of some description behind it. Even witchcraft is supposed to be due to demoniacal operation, since the "arrow," which the sorcerer sends against his victim, ultimately takes the form of an evil spirit. How intimately witchcraft is connected with animistic ideas also appears from Dr. Koch-Grünberg's detailed investigations in Guiana. The sorcerers always operate in alliance with evil demons when they throw their spells to harm other people, and similarly the medicine-men are assisted by all sorts of spirits over whom they have acquired influence when trying to cure the evils inflicted by the wizards.[1] Equally important is the rôle that evil or good spirits play in the witchcraft and medical art of the Chaco Indians. When the Lengua wizards, Mr. Barbrooke Grubb tells us, "desire to afflict their victims with the presence in their bodies of such things as beetles, fish-bones, etc., they can only do so through the aid of the *kilyikhama*" (evil spirits).[1] The same fact I have myself been able to establish in regard to the tribes visited by me in the region of the River Pilcomayo. The evil extracted from the patient's body by the medicine-man may appear in the form of a small splinter, a fish-bone, a pebble, a worm, etc., but it is always a spirit or demon that is supposed to have taken this material form.[2]

---

[1] Koch-Grünberg, *Vom Roroima zum Orinoco*, Bd. III. *Ethnographie*, pp. 209, 210, 211, and *passim*. See also Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p. 335 *sqq.* Barrere, *Nouvelle relation de la France équinoxiale*, p. 341. Coudreau, *Chez nos Indiens*, pp. 208, 209.

Indian witchcraft, therefore, cannot be explained on the principles of that pre-animistic theory which has been forwarded by Dr. Marett. "There is a large and miscellaneous number of diseases," Dr. Marett says, "that primitive man attributes to witchcraft, without at the same time necessarily ascribing them to the visitation of bad spirits. Thus a savage will imagine that he has a crab or a frog, some red ants, or a piece of crystal, in his stomach, introduced by magical means. . . . To remedy such supposed evils the native doctor betakes himself to the sucking cure and the like, whilst he meets spirits with a more or less distinct set of contrivances, for instance, the drum or rattle to frighten them."[3] If Dr. Marett had subjected the ideas underlying primitive witchcraft to a more thorough examination, he would probably in all cases have found that the real cause of the evil is not the material object itself—the crab, the ant, the crystal, etc.—but an intangible power or spirit incorporated in that object. There is every reason to assume that these ideas are world-wide, and not limited to the American Indians.

How disease or illness of any kind is believed to make persons and things taboo is shown, for instance, by the practices of the Colorado Indians. When an Indian falls ill, not only the patient himself, but all other persons living in the same house as himself, are bound to diet, being allowed to eat nothing but green plantain. The plantain intended for the patient must be boiled in a special small pot, and is taken from a special small bundle which is kept hanging at the roof, and must not come in contact with the earth. Every time that some plantain is to be boiled for him, the fruits are taken directly from this bundle, and put directly into the small pot. Even the shells of these bananas are left hanging in the roof. The relatives of the patient go on dieting in this way for nine days after he fell ill. Every evening during these nine days the big drum, hanging in the hall of the house, is beaten with a view to keeping off demons of disease.[1]

---

[1] Grubb, *An Unknown People in an Unknown Land*, p. 153.

[2] Karsten, *The Toba Indians of the Bolivian Gran Chaco* (*op. cit.*), p. 52 *sqq.* Idem, *La religion de los Indios Mataco-Noctenes* (*Anales del Museo Nacional de Historia Natural de Buenos Aires*, tomo xxiv., 1913), p. 211. See also *supra*, 370 *sq.*

[3] Marett, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

The idea that disease carries a dangerous contagion, which is generally personified as demoniacal, also appears in the practices of the Canelos Indians of eastern Ecuador. When a member of the family falls ill, a medicine-man takes the narcotic *ayahuasca* in order to find out the true nature of the malady, and thereafter gives the rest of the family members certain instructions. The father, mother, sisters, and brothers of the patient are not allowed to eat salt or *aji* (Indian pepper) during the first days after he fell ill. The patient himself only eats boiled and mashed plantain and certain kinds of small fish. If his state grows worse and he is about to die, his nearest relatives have to submit to the same restricted diet, being allowed to eat nothing but boiled and mashed plantain. On the other hand, when the patient is recovering he can eat some other kind of light food in addition to plantain. As to fish, he is, however, forbidden to eat a large fish of the species *Silurus* (called *sungarapu* by the Canelos Indians). This fish is provided with large fins very much like the thorns which the sorcerers make use of when bewitching people, and would therefore have the effect of making the state of the patient worse.

All these dietetic rules of the Canelos Indians are due to the consideration that the food in the house is infected and tabooed by the disease, or more correctly, by the disease-demon. An uncautious diet on the part of the patient, therefore, would have the effect of aggravating his own condition. Again, when the relatives fast, this is partly due to the idea that they are likely to be infected by the disease themselves, partly to consideration for the sick person. According to Indian belief, there exists such an intimate physical and spiritual relationship between all members of a family, that if the relatives eat some unsuitable food, this will badly affect the delicate patient much in the same way as the diet of an Indian father is believed to have influence upon the state of his newborn son. It should be observed that the obligation to fast is only incumbent on the nearest relatives of the patient, not upon other persons who happen to live in the same house. The diet of the latter has no influence on the condition of the patient, nor are they on their own part believed to incur the same risk of being infected by the disease.

---

[1] Karsten, "The Colorado Indians of Western Ecuador," in *Ymer*, 1924, Heft II., p. 148.

But the disease-demons cannot be distinguished from demons of death, to which we should first of all pay attention in order to understand Indian conception of taboo. To the savage, death is the great source of infection and pollution, and gives rise to an almost endless series of taboos. The corpse itself is dreaded, and the persons who have handled it or helped to convey it to the grave are looked upon as unclean. The house where a death has occurred is, as a rule, destroyed, and the whole place not seldom abandoned. The food in the house is considered polluted, just as also the cups and cooking-vessels. The mourners are taboo and cut off from any intercourse with other people for a certain time. Widows are secluded, and cannot marry again at once, and so forth. The question may be raised: What is the true nature of this taboo ? Are the funeral ceremonies and other rites performed after a death to be explained as precautions against the ghost of the departed, or against an impersonal magical contagion or infection—" a spontaneous mesmeric power of evil," to use the words of Dr. Farnell—of which the dead body is regarded as the seat ? As far as I can see, this latter explanation is not confirmed by a closer examination of the ideas and rites of the Indians. The taboo of death in their belief is inseparably connected with animism. In the Gran Chaco, for instance, all rites of this kind are so obviously directed against a personal malevolent or harmful being, the ghost or death-spirit, that there could be no doubt about the matter, even were it not expressly confirmed by the natives themselves. This not only holds true of the burial rites proper, but also, for instance, of the purificatory ceremonies with fire which are regularly practised after a death. The house of death, as well as the property of the deceased, and especially his clothes and other things with which he had been in contact, are destroyed by fire. If many deaths have taken place through an epidemic disease, the whole village is burnt. In other cases it is, among the Pilcomayo tribes, purified by fire brands being swayed round in all directions in the evening of the day that death took place, loud shouts being given from time to time to chase away the demons.[1] Much the same purification ceremony is practised among the Lenguas in the Paraguayan Chaco. *Palo santo* wood is burnt and carried round the village; a hole is dug to receive the ashes of the village fires, which are carefully collected and buried.[1] From what Mr. Grubb relates about the burial customs of the Lenguas, it appears that both this and other rites have the same object as among the Pilcomayo tribes, namely, to drive away the spirit of the dead, whose presence in the village is feared. Of the purificatory rites of the Tobas, I have myself stated elsewhere: " When the natives burn such things as have belonged to the departed or been in some contact with him, this practice is solely due to their fear of the infection or pollution of death attaching to such things. They are therefore given over to the fire, the strongest means of purification they know. But it ought to be added that this infection of death is always personified—that is, it is the death-demon with which the Indians fear to come into contact. If anybody, especially any one of the relatives, keeps these things and, for instance, eats from a vessel which had been used by the deceased, the evil demon may enter into him or her and cause disease and death."[2]

---

[1] See Karsten, *The Toba Indians of the Bolivian Gran Chaco* (*Acta Academiæ Aboënsis.* Humaniora, iv.), p. 93. Idem, *La religion de los indios Mataco-Noctenes* (*op. cit.*), p. 217.

Much the same purificatory rites are performed after a death among the different tribes in Ecuador, and all of them, as I was able to establish, are based on purely animistic ideas. Their object is either to ward off the ghost of the dead person, or to cleanse the house, the village, or the mourners, from the contagion of death, which is always personified into an evil demon. Fasting is, for instance, in eastern Ecuador, generally observed for some time by the nearest relatives of the defunct, the reason for this practice being that the food is polluted by the disease- and death-spirit, and therefore may cause the survivors to fall ill and die. Similar customs and ideas seem to prevail among other tribes of the Amazonian territory. Among the Siusi, in north-west Brazil, as soon as a death has taken place, all clay vessels in the same house are emptied and all eatables destroyed. Until the corpse has been buried, the survivors are only allowed to eat manioc-bread and Indian pepper. Shortly after the burial the chief chants a sort of conjuration on the grave, saying, among other things: " It is all over! He lies in his grave! Now you can again eat everything." Thereupon follows a long enumeration of all those fruits and animals which the mourners are again allowed to eat.[1] The burial rites of the Siusi appear to have been essentially precautions against the ghost of the dead, which is believed to haunt the place, especially so long as the corpse remains unburied, but also for some days afterwards.[2]

---

[1] Grubb, *op. cit.*, p. 168 *sq.*

[2] Karsten, *op. cit.*, p. 95 *sq.*

Among the Taulipang and other Arawak tribes the following taboo rules are prescribed for the relatives of the defunct. During one month they are not allowed to work. If they go to the plantation while the corpse is mouldering, the manioc stalks will fade. "The manioc will feel the putrefaction of the corpse and will putrefy itself." If they carry a back-basket, they will feel pains in the back, in the spine, and in the legs. The fire can only be fanned with a fire-fan. If they blow on it, they will get headache. If they seize an axe, they will turn giddy. If they seize a knife, they will get pains in the arms. They are not allowed to speak loudly. They may not eat big game. Everything that they eat or drink, birds and fish, *mingau* and Indian pepper, must be rendered harmless by a conjuration. Dr. Koch-Grünberg adds that there are much the same taboo prescriptions for a girl when she has passed through her first menstruation.[3]

Here we have a series of taboos which at the first glance may seem to allow of an interpretation independent of animism. The mourners are, as it were, impregnated by a magical energy or potency which will exert a harmful influence upon delicate things with which they come in contact, and especially on their own health, in case they uncautiously expose themselves to danger in their mode of life and their diet. However, whether this energy or potency is in itself personified or not, it is certain that there is at all events a personal being, a spirit or demon behind it, from whom it is thought to proceed. As to the Guiana Indians just mentioned, Dr. Koch-Grünberg makes some additional statements which illustrate their ideas about the taboo of death. The mourners, also, we are told, fabricate certain sticks of arrow cane with parallel double rings incised, which are painted with roucou paint. When they leave their houses during the day, they carry these sticks, which have previously been blown on, in order that evil spirits, *mauari*, "probably in the first place the evil death-spirit," may do them no harm. If they leave the house in the evening, they, for the same reason, carry firebrands in their hands.[1] As we find, these Guiana Indians practise much the same funeral rites as we have encountered among the Chaco tribes, and they may be compared with those practised by many other South American Indians. They undisputably suggest a personal cause behind the taboo of death. The mourners, to whom the ghost of the departed is thought to be attached, are surrounded by an atmosphere of death which automatically shows its pernicious influence upon almost everything they are doing.

---

[1] Koch-Grünberg, *Zwei Jahre unter den Indianern*, i. 165 *sq.*

[2] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, i. 166. Compare also *op. cit.*, ii. 151.

[3] Koch-Grünberg, *Vom Roroima zum Orinoco*, Bd. III. *Ethnographie*, p. 168.

That mourners are believed to carry their dangerous contagion to other people also, and therefore are kept secluded for some time after the death, is a well-known fact, of which I have mentioned various instances in previous chapters, assigning the animistic basis of this superstition.[2]

As to the nature of the spirits or demons which lie behind the taboo rules connected with disease and death, some words may be added. Speaking of the funeral rites, I have stated that they are directed, now against the ghost of the departed, now against the disease- and death-spirit, from which the conclusion may be drawn that the two notions are identical. In dealing with the customs called ceremonial mutilations I have, however, pointed out that there is an important distinction to be made between the ghost of the departed and the evil demon which caused the patient's death by entering into his body.[3] Only by keeping this distinction in view can we understand fully the funeral and mourning customs which otherwise would, in many cases, seem hopelessly contradictory. Partly they seem to be expressions of a loving care of the departed relative, partly inspired by abject fear of the same spirit. The difference between the two classes of spirit, it seems to me, appears very clearly, for instance, in the description which Mr. Grubb gives of the burial customs of the Lenguas. The departed souls of men are called *aphangak*, of whom Mr. Grubb states that they " appear to take no interest in the living, nor, beyond causing uncanny feelings when supposed to be hovering about, do they seem in the least to influence those left behind." They retain their bodily and mental characteristics in the shade-land; a man who was kindly-natured in life remains so after death, and so forth.[4] On the other hand, we are told that the death-spirits are feared to such extent that the patient, when death seems imminent, is abandoned by the rest and not seldom buried before he is perfectly dead. "The whole village is left desolate save for a few awestruck Indians who have been deputed to carry out the last dismal rites." Some of the rites performed previous to burying the corpse are very peculiar, and, for instance, consist in the placing of hot embers beneath the feet of the corpse and on the head. If, however, the seat of trouble has been in the head, then, after the body has been placed in the grave, they batter the skull with clubs; if in the region of the heart, arrows are shot into it, and sometimes a stake is driven through the shoulder and slanting out below the ribs, thus pinning the body to the side of the grave. In the case of dropsy, the body is shot at, and a bunch of herbs is held by the man conducting the burial. This is afterwards burnt, and each of the party swallows some of the smoke. A common rite is the cutting open of the side and the insertion into the wound thus made of heated stones, an armadillo's claw, some dog's bones, and, occasionally, red ants.[1] Mr. Grubb says that he did not fully comprehend all these rites, but that they are inspired by superstitious fear is obvious. In fact, it appears that they are directed, not against the ghost of the dead, the *aphangak*, as we may surmise, but against the evil demons called *kilyikhama*, to whom the Lenguas invariably ascribe death-bringing disease. The demon is naturally believed to be present in that part of the body of the dying person, or his corpse, which was the seat of the trouble, and the rites described are, no doubt, attempts to drive him away from the body. Similarly, the other burial and mourning customs of the Lenguas, the burning of the house and the property of the deceased, the blackening of the face, the veiling, etc., are evidently precautions against the same evil spirits, which are believed to look for fresh victims among the survivors. But the difference between the *aphangak*, or spirits of the dead, and the *kilyikhama* is essential, although the latter may to a certain extent identify themselves with the former. We are expressly told that *kilyikhama* are constantly watching for an opportunity to seize not only the body but also the soul of living persons.[2]

---

[1] Koch-Grünberg, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

[2] See *supra*, pp. 7 *sqq.*, 253, etc.

[3] *Supra*, p. 183.

[4] Grubb, *op. cit.*, pp. 120, 121.

---

[1] Grubb, *op. cit.*, p. 162. See the chapter *Burial Rites*, p. 160 *sqq.*

[2] Grubb, *op. cit.*, pp. 127, 135. Azara, speaking of the same Indians, states that when someone dies, this, according to their idea, is due to the fact that "Death has introduced himself among them" (*Viajes por la America del Sur*, p. 227). Here "Death" does not mean the soul of the dead, but signifies the disease- and death-bringing demon.

Exactly the same difference between the souls of the dead and spirits in a more general sense, I have myself found to exist in the animistic conception of the tribes in the Bolivian Gran Chaco. The Tobas call disembodied human souls *kadepakál*, the Matacos *kasītah*, the Chorotis *sa'ah*. Their respective names for evil disease- and death-spirits are *peyák*, *nahút*, and *mohsek*. The "soul"—a shadow-like image of the body—awakes uncanny feelings with the living, and its continued presence in the village is certainly not desired. But this being is very different from the death-demons proper, who are extremely feared without having any kind of cult paid to themselves. Thus, when the Matacos burn their village on account of an epidemic to which several persons have fallen victims, and leave the whole place, they do this out of fear of the *nahút*, those strange evil spirits who took away their tribesmen and are likely to kill all the people in the village. Similarly, of the Lules or Tonocotes, an ancient tribe in the Paraguayan Chaco, we are told that when attacked by an epidemic they regularly sought to evade it by flight, and in so doing always followed a sinuous, not a straight course. They said that when the disease made after them, he would be so exhausted by the turnings and windings of the route that he would never be able to come up with them.[1] In the same way, for instance, among the Jibaros in Ecuador the *wakani* or souls of the dead differ from the class of demons which are called *iguanchi*, or, among the Canelos Indians, the *aya* (souls) from the *supai* (demons). Several statements to the same effect could be mentioned from other parts of South America. Thus of the Macheyenga in eastern Peru we are told that they "have no fear of the dead," that is, of the ghost or soul of the departed. Nevertheless, when one member of the family dies the others desert the home, and build another some distance away. "They leave the house because they are afraid of the disease that took away the other member of the family, and for no other reason."[2] It is evident that in this case the disease or, more strictly speaking, disease-spirit, whom these Indians are afraid of, is a different being from the ghost which they are said not to fear. The same difference appears in a statement relating to the Indians of the Orinoco. When asked why they always destroy their houses and move away to another part of the country after a death, they answered that they do so because "Death has entered the village and they could not live safe in his company."

[1] Lozano, *Descripción chorographica del Gran Chaco*, p. 100.

[2] Farabee, *Indian Tribes of Eastern Peru*, pp. 12, 13.

They even were able to show the missionary the way along which Death had taken the soul of the deceased out from the house.[1]

It may be added, however, that although the disembodied souls of the dead must be distinguished from the category of spiritual beings whom I have called "disease- and death-demons," this does not necessarily imply that the two classes of spirit are wholly of different origin. On the contrary, I believe that a careful examination would lead to the conclusion that the "demons" also—such spirits as the *kilyikhama*, the *nahút*, the *mohsek*, the *supai*, the *iguanchi*, etc.—have originally been nothing but ghosts of dead men which for one reason or another have assumed a positively evil nature. This, indeed, can in some cases be strictly proved, and it is a well-known fact that certain disembodied souls, especially the souls of wizards, murdered persons, etc., are changed into evil demons who visit other people with sickness and death.

The disease- and death-demons, moreover, as stated before, have a tendency to identify themselves with the souls of the departed in a way which, in some cases, makes it practically impossible to distinguish them from each other. The disease-spirit—such seems to be the general belief—having once got possession of the patient and caused his death, will thereafter remain in his body and seize his soul as well, with the result that he is himself altogether changed into an evil demon independently of what has been his character in life. This belief naturally makes the ideas of the Indians about the spirits of the departed more complicated and also explains why persons who in their life-time have perhaps been loved and esteemed, after death are feared as malignant and dangerous beings. The change is due to the operation of the strange demon who invaded the deceased. The more power a person had in life, the more dangerous he will become after death, for the obsessing demon lays hold of that power. This is the true reason why old people, and particularly medicine-men, are so greatly feared after death.[1]

---

[1] Gumilla, *Historia natural de las naciones del Orinoco*, i. 233. In a statement by Father Rivero on the Betoyes, living on the same great river, the difference between the two classes of spirit is still more clearly set forth. "Su principal cuidado," the Father says, "es no privar a la pobre alma de su alivio en el estado de separación." They consequently put down weapons, implements, vessels, food, etc., in the grave which is made ready within the house. "Hecha esta diligencia," he continues, "pensando que el sitio donde vivia tiene la culpa de este muerte y desgracia fatal, lo desamparan luego y mudan el pueblo a otra parte, donde se aseguran de la muerte" (Rivero, *Historia de las misiones de los llanos de Casanare y los rios Orinoco y Meta*, p. 346).

From the same point of view we have probably to explain the harmful magical potency or virtue which is generally thought to be seated in the bones and other remains of the dead, in objects which have been in contact with the dead body, and in tombs and burial-places. It is the " taboo of death " personified. The notion also appears in an interesting way in such objects as masks, trumpets, bull-roarers, and other religious instruments used at the conjuration of spirits. Thus, among the Indians of north-west Brazil, the masks worn at the death-feasts and the sacred flutes used at the Yurupary ceremonies are to such extent taboo to the women that they may die on the spot if they happen to see the mysterious instruments. The same we are told about the clay flutes which are blown during the Cachimana mysteries on the Orinoco, and of the bull-roarers with which the Bororô conjure the spirits of the departed. Similarly, the very " men-houses " and " flute-houses " where the sacred instruments are kept are taboo to women and children. All these objects are regarded as the seat of a dangerous power or potency which, seemingly, acts mechanically like an electric force. Nevertheless, the intimate association of this power with animistic ideas is obvious. The masks, flutes, and bull-roarers have become taboo by their contact with death-spirits which have been compelled to enter into them. In north-west Brazil, for instance, the flutes are called by the same name (*koai*) as the demon in whose honour they are blown, and it is expressly said that it is the *koai* that kills the women who are exposed to the dangerous influence of the tabooed instrument.

A third chief source of taboo is *blood.* That in the lower culture a manslayer is generally regarded as taboo, since he is believed to be pursued by the angry ghost of the slain, is a well-known fact. A typical instance of this we have found in the ceremonies performed with the Tupi warrior after the killing of a captive. At present we have to point out that the shedding of human blood is particularly apt to make the slayer taboo. The ideas prevailing among the South American Indians on this point are best shown with regard to the Jibaros. When the Jibaros have made a successful attack on an enemy, all those warriors who took part in the massacre are afterwards taboo, the rules which they have to observe including restrictions in diet, seclusion, sexual abstinence, etc. Thus, on their very return from the war expedition they must fast, being allowed to eat only boiled and mashed manioc, and this food must be cooked exclusively by the slayers themselves. No other man, and still less a woman, may prepare it. When the warriors eat, they never touch the manioc with their fingers, but use small wooden pins to eat with. Their hands having been polluted with the blood of their enemies, the food would likewise be polluted, and they would expose themselves to death. Moreover, the warriors are not allowed to bathe or to wash themselves in any way until they reach home. Dirty and soiled with blood, as they departed from battle, they should arrive home. This also holds good of their clothes as well as of their weapons with which the enemies were killed. It is not until later, at a general ceremonial purification at home, that the victors and their weapons can be washed.

---

[1] The following strange custom prevails among the Chorotis. Old men are particularly supposed to be gifted with magical powers, and therefore are not allowed to die a natural death. When they grow weakly and sickly they are killed by an arrow-shot, whereupon they are burnt together with their whole property. The reason which they gave me for practising this custom was, that if an old man (a sorcerer) is allowed to die a natural death, he will be changed into an evil demon who will rage in the village and kill all the people. This, according to their belief, can be prevented by putting him to a premature violent death.

Special strict taboo rules were imposed on the Jibaro warrior who cut off the head of an enemy and thus acquired a trophy. The blood still attaching to him after the bloodshed is ceremonially " washed off " at the preliminary feast called *numbuimartinyu* (" the blood-washing feast "), the principal ceremony of which consists in the legs of the victor being coated with hen's blood. A ceremonial bath in the river completes the purification. In order to break the fast, the slayer has, moreover, to wash his mouth with a magical solution prepared from the twigs and leaves of the guayusa-tree (*Ilex sp.*), to which supernaturally purifying effects are ascribed. Later on the final great victory-feast is celebrated, at which various ceremonies are performed with the head-trophy and the victor himself, who, among other things, is painted with genipa, the very astringent juice of the tree *Genipa americana.*

The blood of the enemy with which the victor has been polluted makes him taboo to other people also with whom he comes in personal contact, his nearest relatives being most endangered. At the preliminary feast the slayer has to perform a ceremonial dance whereby he is assisted by his wife or his daughter, or some other female relative.

The two women are afterwards taboo. By touching the still blood-stained hands and clothes of the slayer, they have likewise been polluted with the blood of the murdered enemy, are consequently exposed to danger from the revengeful spirit, and have to be purified from the blood and to observe other rules of precaution. From this moment, up to the time for the celebration of the final great victory-feast, they, among other things, have to fast in the same way as the slayer himself. The taboo seems to act mechanically, but behind it there is always a personal cause—the spirit of the slain. The spirit is believed to be present in the blood, but especially in the bloody trophy, which is therefore highly taboo and dangerous to handle.[1] But we have seen that the ceremonies of the great victory-feast are performed for the very purpose of removing the baneful qualities attaching to the trophy in its " natural " state, and that, in case this end is attained, the trophy is in consequence transformed into an extremely lucky object, a real fetish filled with supernatural power or *mana*. The head-trophy of the Jibaros and the ideas connected with it thus offer a direct significant instance in support of the hypothesis that taboo and *mana* only form the negative and positive pole of one and the same thing, or that there is at bottom the same power behind both. But this power, moreover, turns out to be purely animistic, proceeding from a human soul or spirit.

Just as the human blood, so the blood of animals may be taboo, and this, indeed, is quite natural considering that, to the animistic philosophy of the Indians, there is practically no difference between animals and men. Many Indian tribes, for instance, at the slaughtering of their domestic animals avoid shedding their blood, death being effected by strangulation. This was the rule both among the Chaco tribes and among the Jibaro Indians in Ecuador, and it seems to me probable that the reluctance to shed the blood of living domestic animals is mainly due to superstitious reasons: the soul of the animal is believed to be in its blood. As to wild animals, there does not generally exist a similar reluctance, and only seldom we hear of attempts to propitiate the game killed in hunting. The best instance of such a propitiation is afforded by the Bororó, of whom, quoting Professor von den Steinen, I have stated that they deem it necessary to " bless " the fish caught and the game killed, in order to render it harmless as food. We are also told that these superstitious practices were due to the belief that the souls of *baris* or medicine-men had taken up their abode in the game.[1] A later traveller among the Bororó, Mr. Cook, says, among other things: "They do think, seemingly, that every tapir, and every wild pig, and every alligator, and possibly every member of some other family of animals, shelters the shade of one or another of their departed tribesmen, and they never kill one of these creatures when a sorcerer is not within reach to exorcise the soul, for they dare not under any circumstances eat the flesh of such a creature until the sorcerer has cast out the soul. They believe that if they should eat it, they would surely die."[2]

---

[1] Karsten, *Blood Revenge, War, and Victory Feasts among the Jibaro Indians of Eastern Ecuador*, pp. 18, 34, 37, 39.

Even independently of death, blood, and particularly human blood, is regarded as an important source of taboo, as appears for instance from the rules and restrictions laid on women at menstruation and childbirth, of which an account has been given in previous chapters. From the facts mentioned it clearly appeared that the harmful influence which proceeds from a woman at these critical epochs in her life is intimately connected with animistic ideas. Thus her own uncleanness, and the dangerous pollution she is supposed to carry to everything with which she comes in contact, seem to be ultimately due to the evil and impure spirits who, in Indian belief, take special interest in her on these occasions.[3]

The ideas of taboo we have examined above may be further illustrated by certain magical ceremonies of the ancient Peruvians, performed with a view to expelling diseases and other evils. Periodic expulsion of material or spiritual evils occurs as a magical ceremony in different parts of the world, but in South America we meet this custom in its most typical form in the Inca empire, where it was closely connected with the peculiar religious dualism which was characteristic of the half-civilized Peruvians.

Among the great feasts of the Incas there was one called *citua*, which was celebrated annually in the month of September, called *coya-raymi*. The feast fell in this month, we are told, because the rains commenced at this time, and with the first rains there is generally much sickness. Before it began, all strangers, all whose ears were broken, all deformed persons, were sent two leagues out of the city, it being said that they should take no part in the feast, because they were in that state as a punishment for some fault. Unfortunate people ought not to be present, it was believed, because their ill-luck might drive away some piece of good fortune. They also drove out the dogs that they might not howl. They brought the figures of their huacas from all parts of the land, from Quito to Chile, and placed them in the temples they had at Cuzco. When everything was arranged, the Inca arrived with the nobles and the majority of the people, and passed to Coricancha (the temple of the Sun), where they stayed waiting that the new moon would rise. And when the people saw the new moon, they all went to the market-place of Cuzco, shouting that all diseases, disasters, misfortunes, and dangers might leave the country. When the shouts commenced at Cuzco, all the people, great and small, came to the doors of their houses, crying out, shaking their mantles and, shouting: "Let the evils be gone. How greatly desired has this festival been by us. O Creator of all things, permit us to reach another year, that we may see another feast like this." And they carried the shouts to certain rivers, Cusibamba, Quiquisana, Apurimac, and others. Each clan marched in its own direction, shouting loudly, in order to throw the evil in the river situated in that direction. And all danced, the Inca himself amongst them. In the morning they went out to the rivers and fountains and bathed, saying that the maladies might go out of them. The reason why they bathed in these rivers was that they were very rapid, and, as they emptied themselves into the sea, it was thought that they would take away the diseases.

---

[1] See *supra*, p. 277.

[2] Cook, *Through the Wildernesses of Brazil*, p. 408. It is therefore impossible to explain the rites of the Bororó to propitiate the game on pre-animistic principles, as is done by Dr. Preuss (*Über den Ursprung der Religion und Kunst* (*Globus*, Bd. LXXXVI.), p. 375. If, with Dr. Preuss, we hold the animistic explanation given by v. d. Steinen and Cook to be "a later idea," invented to explain the rites in question, we of course have to prove it, but no such evidence is given by Dr. Preuss.

[3] See *supra*, pp. 10 *sqq.*, 175 *sqq.*

When the people had finished bathing, they took great torches of straw, bound round with cords, which they lighted and passed from one to the other, striking each other with them and saying: "May all evils go away." These torches of straw they called *pancurcu*. Having finished this, they went to their houses where they had prepared a kind of paste made of mashed maize, which they called *sancu*. This paste they rubbed in their faces, and also anointed the door-steps with it, as well as the places where they had their food and their clothes. Moreover, they took of the same *sancu* to the fountains, threw it into them saying that they might not be ill, and that no malady might enter into their houses. They also sent this *sancu* to their relatives and friends for the same purpose; and even the corpses of the dead they smeared with this paste, so that they also might enjoy the benefits of the feast.[1]

Most of the ceremonies performed at the feast *citua* are familiar to us from our previous investigations, and need no detailed explanations. The idea that diseases, misfortunes, and troubles of any kind are caused by evil spirits which at certain critical times appear in greater numbers and occasion more harm than otherwise, and that these invisible tormentors may be expelled from a village or country by physical means, much in the same way as a molesting swarm of flies is driven off from a room, is met with among most savage and barbaric peoples. In lower culture spiritual evils are often conceived in a half materialistic way as a kind of physical pollution which can be washed away in water or otherwise removed like any impurity; but it is remarkable that this notion appears more clearly among comparatively civilized peoples, such as the Peruvians. Moreover, the idea of material and spiritual pollution is, at a certain stage of religious evolution, associated with ideas of *moral transgression*, and the Inca ritual just described is of interest as illustrating the materialistic conception of sin and the elementary union of religion and ethics. Attention may be called to the detail that, before the feast began, all strangers, all whose ears were broken, and all deformed persons, were expelled from the city, it being said that they should take no part in the feast, " because they were in that state as a punishment for some fault." The primitive idea, with which we are already acquainted, is that sickness or deformity of any kind in newborn children is the result of demoniac operation, and that consequently persons who are affected by some congenital disease or deformity are, as it were, " marked " by evil spirits. The Incas, in conformity with their more advanced religious beliefs, had developed this idea to the notion that such an unlucky state is not purely accidental, but due to the transgression of certain moral precepts. But the way in which, among the ancient Peruvians, old savage taboos were transformed into ethical rules of religious sanction can be studied with more details in an Inca institution of singular interest—the *confession.*

---

[1] In my description of the *citua*-feast I have chiefly followed the detailed relations of Abbé de Molina (*Relación de las fabulas y ritos de los Incas*, pp. 35-41) and Cobo, *Historia del nuevo mundo*, iv. 113 *sqq.*). See also Acosta, *Natural and Moral History of the Indies*, ii. 375 *sq.* Ramos Gavilán, *Historia de Nuestra Señora de Copacabana*, p. 128. Garcilasso de la Vega also describes the feast in detail, but his account in many points differs from that of de Molina and Cobo (*Comentarios reales*, bk. vii., c. 6).

The Peruvian confession is mentioned by most ecclesiastical writers from the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century. It is indeed natural that a religious custom, which so strongly recalled the famous Catholic sacrament, should particularly attract the attention of the men of the Church, to most of whom it would, however—just as also, for instance, the heathen baptism—only appear as an improper and blasphemous forgery, taught by the Devil. Thus, more or less detailed accounts of this religious institution of the Incas are given by the Archbishop Pedro de Villagomez, as well as by de Molina, Cobo, Santillán, and the anonymous Jesuit. In my own description I shall chiefly follow, in part, the relation of the anonymous Jesuit, in part the accounts of de Molina and Cobo, which seem to me most reliable and in the main agree with each other.

The confession had to be made before a kind of priests or diviners which were called *ichuris*, and there seems to have been one such official confessor in each village. A few grave sins were reserved to be confessed before the great *Vilahoma* (*Villac humu*), the *pontifex maximus* of the Incas. Confession, as we shall see, was a public duty incumbent on every member of the Inca society, which was due to the belief that the sins of the individual were likely to have disastrous consequences, not only for himself, but for the whole community or state to which he belonged.

The confession was generally made close to a river. The confessor held in his right hand a bundle of hay or esparto grass, and in the left a small stone tied to a string or fitted into the hole made for the purpose at the end of a stick. The *ichuri* sat down and called for the penitent, who came trembling and threw himself down in front of him. The confessor asked him to raise himself, and admonished him to confess all his sins and conceal nothing, since as a diviner he would know more or less what sins he had committed. The confession was auricular and secret, and, according to the statement of the anonymous Jesuit, a confessor who was convicted of having revealed the secrets confided to him was infallibly put to death.[1]

As to the character of the sins that were confessed, they seem to have consisted partly in crimes against the neighbour's life and property, partly in offences of a religious nature. Thus they accused themselves of not having reverenced the Sun, the Moon, and the huacas; of not having celebrated the feasts of the *raymis*, which were those of each month of the year; of having spoken badly of the Inca and not having obeyed his orders; of any murder, whether it had been committed violently or secretly, that is, by means of sorcery; of thefts, even of things of small value; of attacks and plunders on the roads; of having committed adultery or fornication, as far as it was against the law of the Inca not to touch a strange woman, or to seduce a virgin, unless she was given by the Lord; of plots against the Inca or murmurs, especially when they were directed against the ruler or his law.[1]

---

[1] Anónima, *Relación de las costumbres antiguas de los naturales del Piru* (*Tres relaciónes de antigüedades Peruanas*), p. 166.

In some cases they even had to confess their mere wishes or intentions, for instance, to commit a sin against a virgin, and especially against a *ñusta* or woman of royal blood, or to steal.

When the penitent had finished speaking, and the confessor had reason to believe that he had nothing more to confess, he finally gave him certain moral instructions, exhorting him to adore the gods, and to obey the great *Vilahoma* and the Inca. The person who had confessed, moreover, had to do a certain penance which was determined according to the sins confessed, independently of whether he was poor or rich. After the confession the *ichuri* gave the penitent some light strokes on the back with the small stone tied to the string, whereupon both spit on the bundle of esparto grass, the penitent first, and the confessor afterwards. The latter, moreover, said some words, speaking to his gods, and accursing the sins. This being done, they threw the bundle into the river, praying to the gods that they would take them down into the abyss and hide them there for ever. Lastly, the penitent bathed in the river, it being understood that with this he was definitely purified from his sins. Going out into its currents he pronounced this prayer: " I have confessed my sins before the Sun and Viracocha; as he created me, so he has pardoned me.

---

[1] See de Molina, *op. cit.*, p. 23 *sq.* Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 90. The anonymous Jesuit, who gives the most detailed account of the Peruvian confession, mentions several other sins which were confessed, the majority of which were religious offences (blasphemy, cursing, perjury, dishonouring of parents, etc., Anónima, *op. cit.*, p. 166), but it seems to me that this writer has too much regarded the Peruvian confession with Catholic eyes, and that, accordingly, his relation is in some respects doubtful. This particularly may be said of what he states about the nature of the penance done by those who had confessed their sins. Thousands of Indians, he says, lived in the solitude of the forest, " doing the most severe penance, eating roots and drinking water; and many did this their whole life, in the way of anchorets " (*op. cit.*, p. 168).

River, mayst thou receive them, and take them away to the sea, so that they may appear never again."[1]

In order to understand Peruvian confession, it is first of all necessary to notice on what occasions this religious ceremony took place. The confession in Peru was partly private, partly public. The former was of a more primitive nature, and especially resorted to in cases of *sickness*. Confession as a means of curing sickness is known to be practised even to-day by a few Indian tribes in western South America who are culturally related to the Incas. Thus the Aurohuaca Indians of the Sierra Nevada in Colombia believe that all sickness is a punishment for sin. So when one of their medicine-men is summoned to a sick-bed, he does not inquire after the patient's symptoms, but makes strange passes over him, and asks in a sepulchral voice whether he will confess his sins. If the sick man refuses to confess his frailties, the doctor will not attempt to treat him, but will turn on his heel and leave the house. On the other hand, if a satisfactory confession has been made, the leech directs the patient's friends to procure certain odd-looking bits of stone or shell to which the sins of the sufferer may be transferred, for when that is done, he will be made whole. For this purpose the sin-laden stones or shells are carried high up into the mountains, and laid in some spot where the first beams of the rising sun will strike down on them, driving sin and sickness far away by their radiant influence.[2] Similarly, another Chibcha tribe in Colombia, the half-civilized Ijca Indians, are of opinion that disease may be cured, not only by a magical treatment of the usual kind, but also by the patient confessing his sins. The sickness has been sent by the spirits, and the task of the medicine-man is to find out why they are displeased with the sufferer. A mysterious object, made of leaves obtained from a maize-cob's shell, and certain cotton-threads of different colours, serve as material vehicles for the expulsion of the sickness. The medicine-man (*mama*) exhorts the patient to think what he may have done that was wrong, and to confess it. While the latter is sitting and thinking, the *mama* is handling his divining bag. He strikes it on the ground, and, from the clang of the small stones contained in it, he draws conclusions as to whether the sufferer has confessed everything or not. If the confession is supposed to be complete, there follows the usual expulsion of the sickness by means of the magical objects mentioned, and the patient himself has, moreover, to do a certain penance.[1]

---

[1] Anónima, *op. cit.*, p. 167 *sq.* Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 91. See also Villagomez, *Carta pastoral de exortación e instrucción*, fol. 43, § 3. Morúa, *Historia de los Incas*, p. 218 *sq.* v. Tschudi, *Culturhistorische und sprachliche Beiträge zur Kenntnis des alten Peru*, p. 65 *sq.*

[2] Nicholas, "The Aborigines of Santa Maria, Colombia," in *American Anthropologist*, N.S. III., 1901, pp. 639-641.

Sir James G. Frazer, speaking of the expulsion of sins by means of confession in lower culture, expresses the opinion that " originally the violation of taboo—in other words, the sin—was conceived as something almost physical, a sort of morbid substance lurking in the sinner's body, from which it could be expelled by confession as by a sort of spiritual purge or emetic." Thus, among savages, the " confession and absolution of sins is, so to say, a purely physical process of relieving the sufferer of a burden which sits heavy on his stomach, rather than on his conscience."[2] This observation no doubt contains a good deal of truth; but still we may ask how the expulsion of the " morbid substance " is thought to be possible by merely mentioning it. On this point we have not only to take into consideration the power ascribed to the spoken word, but also the fact that, according to primitive belief, knowledge of the origin and true nature of an evil involves the power to master it, to paralyze its effects. But it is not enough to know the purely physical origin of the sickness, or the particular spirits which are believed to have caused it; it is necessary to know its *moral* origin as well, or—as, for instance, in the case of the Ijca—*why* spirits or gods are displeased with the sufferer. What is especially interesting in such instances as those mentioned above is that, although the savage idea of sickness and its magical treatment is conspicuous in them, the conception of the evil which has caused the sickness is associated with a certain ethical element. This ethical feature in primitive confession, practised as a means of curing sickness, is also pointed out by Dr. Bolinder with regard to the medical art of the Ijca; the sufferer has himself, in one way or another, incurred the righteous anger of the spirits when a misfortune of some kind has happened to him.[3] Now as long as this moral cause remains hidden, its effects will continue, and the patient cannot recover; but as soon as it is exposed in the light of the day, these effects are paralyzed, made *nil*, especially since confession of a sin may also include repentance, a wish that the wrong action were undone, and a resolution not to do it again. Confession in sickness, therefore, is probably not a *purely* physical, but to a certain degree a spiritual process also. But if a moral purge of this kind produces the same favourable effects as a purification by which a miasma or pollution is washed off, we can understand why, by an easy association of ideas, in the conception of " sin " the notions of the material and the spiritual become fused. The idea of sin as a more or less material and remissible substance is especially likely to arise at a stage of evolution where, in general, the fundamental distinction between the physical and the spiritual, characteristic of the philosophic conception of higher culture, does not yet exist; and how mental, just as physical, qualities may literally—for instance, through the food eaten—be transferred from a person to objects outside him, we have seen in the last chapter on the couvade.

---

[1] Bolinder, *Die Indianer der tropischen Schneegebirge*, pp. 139, 140.

[2] Frazer, *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, p. 214.

[3] Bolinder, *Ijca-indianernas kultur*, p. 230.

In ancient Peru it was a common thing that individual persons, when afflicted by disease or misfortune, had recourse to confession, believing that thereby they would get out of their troubles. This confession certainly had the character of a material purification, but it had its salient ethical aspect also. Deeply rooted in the mind of the Peruvians was the idea that disease, like any adversity or misfortune, only befalls man in consequence of *sins* committed. Father Cobo, who particularly points out this, adds that " consequently those were greater sinners who were visited with more serious trials and calamities; and when someone lost his sons through death, they held that his sins must have been particularly great, since, according to the order of nature, the fathers ought to die before the children."[1] As to Peruvian confession in cases of sickness, no particulars are given, but it no doubt was carried out with much the same ceremonies as on other occasions. Father Morúa states that still at his time the priests (*ichuris*) used to receive, in the temple of the Sun, the confessions of suffering persons. " But they did not," he adds, " confess other sins than those which were sufficient to effect relief in the sickness."[2]

So far undoubtedly the motive of the confession of sins in Peru was essentially self-regarding; it was thought to benefit rather the sinner himself than other persons or the society. The former was supposed to recover as soon as he had made a clean breast of his transgressions. But Cobo relates that the Peruvians not only had recourse to confession in their own sickness; it was also customary that a person confessed for another person closely related to him, a woman for the recovery of her husband, a man for the recovery of his wife, his son, or some important person, for instance, the chief.[1] There was, moreover, an important kind of confession which wholly aimed, not at the welfare of the individual or the family, but at the welfare of the community or state; in fact, it was a social *duty* incumbent on any member of the Inca society who had transgressed—or believed he had transgressed—certain divine or human laws. In some cases confession even seems to have been rather compulsory than voluntary. This especially appears from a statement by Father Santillán. When it happened that rain was late, he tells us, or when a frost came which devastated the fields, somebody, who pretended to be a diviner, or had a suspicion against an Indian man or woman, rose and said to the *curaca* (chief) and the sorcerers: " This Indian has *hocha* (sin), and therefore it does not rain." Then the rest seized the man or woman, and took him or her to the confessors. Sometimes it happened that such persons, although they had not *hocha*, said that they had. In other cases, although no denunciation had been made, when, in addition to other misfortunes, a drought set in, it happened that men, and especially women, came and said with dread that they had *hocha*, and went to the sorcerers to confess their sins. And the latter said that because of these sins it had not rained, or that because of them no rain would fall.[2]

---

[1] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 90.

[2] Morúa, *op. cit.*, p. 218.

From this statement we gather that " sin " in the Quichua language was called *hocha* (more correctly *hucha*), and that it was first of all conceived as a sort of baneful miasma or impurity, which was supposed to cling to a person and to endanger not only himself, but the whole community. Public calamity, misfortune of every kind, but especially drought, was likely to follow the individual violation of the rules of taboo. But although prolonged absence of rain was a serious thing in the arid mountain regions of Peru, threatening the population with famine, there was a public calamity which was still more feared because of the general disastrous consequences it was believed to entail—the sickness of the Inca. This, too, was set down to private transgression of moral laws. Father Cobo expressly states that when the Inca fell ill or suffered some other adversity, the Peruvians believed that the sins of his subjects were the cause of it, and not those of the king; consequently, when they learnt that he was ill, the people in all provinces, and especially the inhabitants of the Collao, confessed their sins and made great sacrifices for his health.[1] We already know the reasons why the Peruvians were so anxious to preserve the health of their sovereign: they believed their own welfare to be mysteriously bound up with his. But how the sins of the subjects could cause their divine ruler to fall ill and die, how the frailties of an individual person could cause drought, frost, and other public misfortune, and last, but not least, how in their very conceptions of "sin" and "purification," the Peruvians were able to rise from a purely material to a spiritual and moral plane—these are certainly some of the most difficult, and at the same time most interesting, problems of Inca religion.

---

[1] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 91.

[2] Santillán, *Relación del origen, descendencia, politica y gobierno de los Incas* (*Tres relaciónes de antigüedades Peruanas*), p. 36. Cp. Morúa, *op. cit.*, p. 228: " Quando hacia falta de temporales solian pedir ayuda a las huacas, al Sol, a la Luna y estrellas, llorando y offreciendoles sacrificio de sebo, coca, y de todo lo demas, y *para el mismo fin solian confesarse.*"

The religious view of the Peruvians was dualistic. There were two powers standing against each other; on the one hand, there was the unseen world of the evil spirits or demons; on the other hand, the world of the higher gods: Viracocha, the Sun, Thunder and Lightning, the Moon, and the other huacas, as well as the embalmed corpses of the dead Inca ancestors. The former—that is, the demons—were, as among other savage and barbaric peoples, looked upon as the cause of disease and epidemics, drought, hail and frost, eclipses of the sun and the moon, and of all other misfortunes which befell the individual or the whole community. The gods, again, not only sustained the Inca state in a physical sense; they also represented *a moral order of the world,* which was no less necessary for the existence and harmony of the state, and the human incarnation of which was the Inca ruler. This moral order found a concrete expression in certain positive and negative precepts, to keep from impure things, to revere the gods, to respect the neighbour's life and property, and so forth, which every Inca subject had to follow. The opposition between these two powers was radical enough. If the demons became too numerous and predominant, the power and influence of the gods and of their human representative was necessarily weakened, and the divine order which held society together was threatened with dissolution. Hence a feast like the *citua,* through which the atmosphere was cleansed from the invisible molesters for some time onward, and the world was enabled to continue its normal course. Hence, also, an institution like public confession, in which the development towards a spiritual conception of transgression was complete.

---

[1] Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 90.

In this combat between contrary spiritual powers the individual member of the Inca society had to take up his position, and the consequences of his conduct would be both private and social. Thus the belief of the Peruvians just mentioned, that disease and adversity only befall men as a result of their sins, was intimately connected with the dualistic and ethical character of their religion; through his transgressions a person incurred the righteous anger of the gods, was put outside their protection, and given up to the attacks of the demons. There were certain actions which were inseparably associated with the powers of Darkness, or rather, the powers of Impurity, for the essence of the demons was impurity. An " impure " action was likely to put evil spirits in motion and to diminish, in a higher or lesser degree, the power of the gods and the power of the Inca. But there were, as we have seen, two kinds of impurity and two kinds of evils: material or physical and moral evils. We have no difficulty in understanding why, for instance, persons affected with some disease, or with some bodily defect or deformity, or polluted by violation of the ordinary rules of taboo, were believed to be in a condition of demoniacal uncleanness, and their mere presence to be a danger to the welfare of the state. But it is remarkable that moral evils were looked upon in the same light: a person who committed an immoral deed was regarded as standing in alliance with evil spirits. Consequently, to the mind of the Peruvians, the rites by which the effects of such an immoral deed were paralyzed involved a purification of the same kind as that by which any breach of taboo was atoned for. Among these moral evils or sins offences against religion were evidently the most important. The person who wilfully neglected the cult of the native gods, who did not worship the Sun and the other huacas, committed a sin, the consequences of which were far from falling merely on the sinner himself. It was not only that the gods thus offended were likely to revenge themselves. Since the power of the gods to a great deal depended upon the sacrifices offered to them by their worshippers, it moreover followed that the irreligious transgressor, by his conduct, assisted the evil spirits in their fight against the powers of Light and Purity, and exposed the whole community to danger. Father Morúa relates that when the Inca Pachacutic conquered the Aimará tribes of Peru and instituted the cult of the huacas, he enacted that they should be adored in the whole kingdom, " telling them and giving them to understand that if they would not do this, they could not live, and that the Sun would get angry."[1] Where a real state religion existed, as in the Inca empire, the worship of strange gods, instead of those of the country, would particularly bring public calamity and—just as in the ancient Roman empire—provoke general moral indignation against the " atheists." From the point of view of the Peruvians it was no doubt a great sin when some of the Indians commenced to worship the Christian God, and we have no reason to disbelieve Villagomez when he states that in their confessions they, amongst other things, " used to accuse themselves of having gone to adore the God of the Spaniards instead of adoring their huacas."[2] Blasphemy and cursing of the gods or the Inca would naturally be regarded as the most heinous of sins, for according to the belief which the Incas had in common with all barbaric peoples, curses are pervaded by a magical potency which acts irresistibly both upon men and supernatural powers.

But we have seen that the Peruvians in their confessions also accused themselves of crimes which, from our point of view, had not a religious, but a purely social character. These crimes were of three categories: murder, theft, and sexual offences, the last-mentioned including adultery and fornication. Murder is one of the crimes with regard to which we can directly observe how a primitive taboo is developed into an ethical precept. Murder in most cases is connected with bloodshed, but human blood is taboo in the highest degree. The village and community, wherein a murder took place, was naturally regarded as polluted, and the number of the demons was augmented with the angry and revengeful ghost of the slain who, even independent of bloodshed, would haunt that village. But it is certain that in ancient Peru murder was not regarded as a crime merely because of its connection with primitive ideas of taboo, but also for more general reasons. The same may be said of such offences as theft, adultery, and fornication, which probably were only indirectly associated with evil spirits. Honesty is everywhere in South America one of the native virtues of the Indians, but nowhere has the right of property been held more sacred than in the Inca empire. Thefts, even of things of small value, occurred extremely seldom, as an ancient chronicler says, partly because among the Peruvians theft was regarded as a very great crime, partly because of the dishonour which followed it, and the severe punishments which descended on the thief.[1] More liberal is the view which the Indians generally take of sexual crimes, adultery, fornication, and others, and the same probably was the case with the Peruvians, at least before they were conquered by the Incas. We know that especially adultery or fornication committed with a woman of royal blood, a *ñusta*, or the seduction of some of the *mamacunas* (virgins of the Sun), was a mortal sin, and punished with death. But the law of the Incas prohibited any kind of illicit intercourse, and this very fact was evidently for the majority of their subjects a sufficient motive for regarding it as a crime. Both de Molina and Cobo observe that the Peruvians used to confess fornication " not because they felt that fornication in itself is a sin, but because it was a transgression of the law of the Inca which prohibited it."[2] The same no doubt to a certain extent held true with regard to other crimes also. It is to be observed that in the Inca empire, with its wonderful political centralization of power, all crimes would be regarded with horror, and provoke public indignation, simply for the reason that they were a violation of the divine order represented and upheld by the Inca ruler. In a theocratic state morality will necessarily be theonomic—that is, all moral rules will be looked upon as having a divine or supernatural origin and sanction, and any violation of them consequently be regarded as a " sin." If this was so, the moral and criminal laws of the Incas would easily be connected with their demonology. Any person defying the commands of the Inca, and violating the moral order instituted by him, *eo ipso* professed his adherence to the supernatural enemies of that order. The result of such a violation would necessarily manifest itself in events which marked the triumph of the demons, and would therefore first of all be of a physical nature. Since the Inca was a human incarnation of Divinity, in the first place of the Sun, and its highest representative, we can understand why the sins of his subjects should in their consequences especially descend on himself, in extreme cases causing him to fall ill and die. Every crime was, so to say, a momentary spiritual eclipse of the Sun-god, in a way comparable with the feared material eclipses of the sun and the moon through evil spirits, so vividly described by Garcilasso de la Vega.[3]

---

[1] Morúa, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

[2] Villagomez, *op. cit.*, fol. 43, § 3.

[1] Ramos Gavilán, *Historia de Nuestra Señora de Copacabana*, p. 102.

[2] de Molina, *op. cit.*, p. 23. Cobo, *op. cit.*, iv. 90.

[3] That literally the sins of the people were believed to cause eclipses of the sun, is indicated by Garcilasso de la Vega. " Decian al eclipse Solar, que el Sol estaba enojado por algun delicto que avian hecho contra el; pues mostraba su cara turbada, como hombre ayrado, y pronosticaban que les avia de venir algun

These seem to be the principles upon which the public morality of the Inca empire was founded. Where such a view prevailed, an institution like confession would easily arise and attain great importance in social life. By confession the transgressor " threw off " his sins, both the material and the spiritual ones, the procedure always externally taking the form of a physical purification. The rite was thought to avert or remove both private and public evils, and the whole system was based on a train of thought which, to peoples of barbaric culture like the ancient Peruvians, was perfectly natural. From a political point of view this institution was extremely prudent, being, as it was, particularly apt to knit the Inca subjects to their sovereign, and make them dependent on him. Still it is difficult to assume that confession, as it existed in Peru at the time of the discovery, was wholly an invention of the Inca rulers, which they had once forced upon, or otherwise introduced among, the vanquished tribes. It is more probable that it had existed in a primitive form —for instance, as a ceremony of curing disease—among the Aymará even before the Inca invasion, and had only been further developed by the conquerors as a convenient method of keeping the subjected peoples under their control.

My particular task in this chapter, however, has only been to point out the main principles of taboo, and to show how, out of this system of primitive superstition, certain ethical ideas have been developed among those peoples which mark the height of Indian civilization in South America. We have seen that taboo is of animistic origin. It is in its nature a kind of miasma or impurity endowed with a mysterious magical energy which is believed to proceed from evil or harmful spirits, and as its chief sources disease and death and blood have been assigned. The primitive taboos are at a certain stage of culture associated with ideas of moral transgression or sin, at last giving rise to a theonomic morality like that we have encountered among the Incas of Peru. The evolution of this morality appears most clearly in the peculiar institution of Inca religion called confession.

---

grave castigo " (*Comentarios reales*, bk. ii., c. 23). However, the primitive idea of demoniac operation as the cause of such strange phenomena is also apparent, at least in regard to the rites performed at lunar eclipses, described by Garcilasso in the same chapter.

CHAPTER XVI

THE CONCEPTION OF MANA

BESIDES the term taboo, we have in the course of the previous investigations frequently encountered the term *mana*. It is a well-known fact that in modern science of religion this Melanesian word has been adopted to denote a stage in religious evolution characterized, not by a belief in spirits or ghosts, but by a belief in an impersonal power or influence which, according to a theory now accepted by many anthropologists, has existed even prior to animism. But this so-called pre-animistic theory also includes another primitive notion for which Dr. R. R. Marett, to distinguish it from animism proper, has preferred to use the word *animatism*. Whereas animism implies the attribution of souls or spirits to the objects and phenomena of nature, the "animatistic" interpretation only implies that they are, in a general way, by the savage endowed with personality and will. This notion, which is at once wider and vaguer than the ' belief in spiritual beings," according to Marett, is particularly characteristic of "primitive or rudimentary religion," and he has tried to show that numerous traces of such an animatistic or non-animistic conception are still to be found among different uncivilized peoples.[1]

The theory of pre-animism has indeed, by some modern students of primitive religion, been set forth not only as an hypothesis, but almost as a demonstrated truth. It is, however, clear that its validity or non-validity can only be proved by a careful and critical examination of the beliefs and rites of the lower races and the sources from which our knowledge about them is derived. The conclusions at which I have arrived myself with regard to pre-animism, when viewed in the light of South American beliefs, has appeared from my previous statements; primitive Indian religion, as far as I can understand, gives this theory no support. One of the main results of my inquiries, as far as they bear relation to religion, has been that animism forms the essence of the Indian belief in the supernatural. Of

---

[1] Marett, *The Threshold of Religion*, p. 15 *sqq.*

"animatism," in the sense of the word used by Dr. Marett, we have found no traces. If it is theoretically possible to assume a stage of religious thought where the indwelling spirit was not distinguished from the material object, but the latter was simply regarded as a living conscious agent, we have at any rate to establish that this stage has been passed by the South American Indians. This I had reason to point out, for instance, with reference to the worship of mountains, rocks, and stones, as it flourishes in Guiana and elsewhere.

Dr. Marett, in one of his essays on primitive religion, has adduced various instances of a supposed "pre-animistic," or at any rate "non-animistic," religious notion with savages, and he even claims to have conclusively shown "that, in some cases, animistic interpretations have been superimposed on what previously bore a non-animistic sense."[1] However, when we subject these instances to a critical examination, we easily find that in all cases where their significance is clear, they involve animism pure and simple, Dr. Marett obviously being, in his pre-animistic interpretation of them, influenced by his preconceived opinion about "rudimentary" religion. One of Dr. Marett's cases refers to the ideas of the South American Indians. The Fuegians, we are told by Admiral Fitzroy, abstain from killing young ducks on the ground that if they do, "Rain come down, snow come down, hail come down, wind blow, blow, very much blow." The storm is sent by a "big man" who lives in the woods.[2] If any attention is to be paid to this doubtful notice of a passing traveller, we have probably here only a simple instance of sympathetic magic, sea-birds being naturally easily associated with water, and perhaps also, in Tierra del Fuego, with storms. But it seems to me advisable to take Fitzroy's statement about the Fuegians, who for "moral" reasons abstain from killing ducks, with the same distrust as his statement about the "big man" of the woods, who by modern ethnologists—even by those who maintain Fuegian "monotheism"—has been admitted to be a mere creation of the fancy. The other instances of an "animatistic" notion, mentioned by Dr. Marett, have no better foundation. The writer points out that, for example, such phenomena as thunderstorms, eclipses, eruptions, and the like, are apt to awake feelings of awe in primitive man, and to be regarded as manifestations of the supernatural or as "powers" in a general sense, without being necessarily set down to the operation of spirits. "Thus, when a thunderstorm is seen approaching in South Africa, a Kafir village, led by its medicine-man, will rush to the nearest hill, and yell at the hurricane to divert it from its course. Here we have awe finding vent in what, on the face of it, may be no more than a simple straightforward act of personification; . . . but it is *not* animism in the strict scientific sense that implies the attribution not merely of personality and will, but of 'soul' or 'spirit,' to the storm."[1] That thunderstorms, eclipses, and volcanic eruptions are caused by powerful evil spirits—not seldom conceived as disembodied human souls—is probably a universal belief among savage peoples all over the world. How clear ideas the South American Indians have about the character of the demons who are supposed to be active in such stupendous natural phenomena, has sufficiently appeared from my statements on Indian animism. And the ideas prevailing, for instance, among the Kafirs on this point are strikingly similar to those of the Indians.[2] It is strange that, in support of his pre-animistic theory, Dr. Marett should have adduced one of the most typical instances of animism that the religion of the lower peoples affords. Similarly, as I have shown, Dr. Marett's pre-animistic explanation of witchcraft among savage peoples certainly depends on a misunderstanding of a primitive "science" which is essentially based on the idea of spirits or demons, by whose aid supernatural influences are wrought upon other persons. "Animatism," as defined by Dr. Marett, in fact, hardly exists at all, except in the 'incomplete observations' of superficial travellers, and, as far as I can see, the whole word should be discarded as a term of the science of religion.

---

[1] Marett, *op. cit.*, p. x.

[2] Marett, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

On the other hand, we have seen that the Melanesian *mana* answers to a primitive religious notion which exists in South America also. But it is certainly not a *pre-animistic* notion. The analyses I have given of various beliefs and rites of the Indians have repeatedly led to the result that the power of *mana* is not prior to, and independent of, the spirit or soul, but, on the contrary, is secondary to that notion; when things have *mana*, this is due to their connection with a spirit or soul. The mysterious power is attached to several objects which fall within the general category of fetishes, amulets, charms, or, as the Indians often call them, " medicines." Such fetishes or medicines are obtained partly from the animal, partly from the vegetable, partly from the mineral kingdom, but their original source seems to be the human body and soul itself. Trophies obtained from the human body first of all possess " power " and may become real fetishes. A typical instance of this we have found in the head-trophy or scalp, which may be taboo or have *mana*, according to the magical " preparation " to which it has been subject. In either case the power proceeds from the soul or spirit which is believed to have its seat in the head and the hair.

---

[1] Marett, *op. cit.*, p. 14 *sq.*

[2] According to Dudley Kidd, one of our best authorities on the Kafirs and other South African tribes, some of the natives believe that thunder is caused by some old ancestor, whereas others believe that it is caused by hostile spirits. "The natives in Zululand believe that if one examines the spot where lightning struck the ground, the shaft of an assagai will be found. The lightning is thus thought to be some dazzling spear hurled through the air." The Kafirs, therefore, "sometimes place assagais through the roof when the storm begins, thinking that these will ward off the lightning" (Dudley Kidd, *The Essential Kafir*, pp. 119, 120). With this belief we may compare the idea of the Jibaros, mentioned before, that during thunderstorms spirits of departed Jibaro warriors are running through the air, and their custom, on such occasions, to shout loudly and brandish their lances against the clouds to frighten away these supernatural enemies. This is an interesting example of what A. Bastian called an *Elementargedanke—i.e.*, an idea which has arisen independently among different peoples and races, owing to the similarity of the mental constitution of men.

Certain magical medicines are obtained from the bodies of animals. Some animals, birds, reptiles, insects, are " magical," and certain parts of their body possess what may be called *mana*. On closer inquiry we find that such animals become " magical " which are in some way associated with a human soul, usually by its supposed reincarnation in an animal body. A typical instance of a magical beast is the kind of jaguar which is, by the Quichuas and the Aymará, called *uturúncu ;* it is the man-tiger, a sorcerer changed into a jaguar. The skins and claws and teeth of such a beast are supposed to possess a marvellous power, but the fat of the *uturúncu* is particularly famous as an infallible remedy against rheumatic pains and other evils. Most commonly, however, the Indian medicines are obtained from the vegetable kingdom. Within this category the intimate connection between *mana* and spirit is best shown with regard to the intoxicating and narcotic drinks which the Indians are in the habit of preparing from certain fruits or the rinds of certain trees and plants. We have seen that the native beer which is brewed, for instance, from algaroba beans in Chaco and from manioc and maize in other parts of South America, derives its power from the very spirits which, in Indian belief, animate these trees and plants and are particularly present in their fruits. The fact that the Indian, when intoxicated by his beer, believes himself to be filled with a " good spirit," furthermore bears out the animistic origin of the magical power inherent in intoxicating liquors. The ideas connected with the arrow-poison offer another significant instance of the same kind. The poisoned arrow has *mana*, but this power, once more, appears to proceed from the spirit or demon which is the soul of the plant, and to which it owes its poisonous properties. Lastly, we have seen that the power by virtue of which, for instance, certain stone fetishes are believed to bring good luck in war, in agriculture, etc., is due to their connection with spirits of human origin. Thus the *nantára* of the Jibaro women makes the crops grow well because it is supposed to contain something of the soul of the Earth-mother herself; and the " lightning-stones " give success in war because they are believed to have been hurled down from heaven by the spirits of departed warriors.

But it is probably not only in the religion of the Indians that *mana* in this way appears to have a purely animistic origin. From the very definition of the Melanesian *mana*, given by Dr. Codrington, we gather that the supernatural power or influence denoted by this word bears close relation to a spirit or ghost. Having mentioned different cases in which the said power is made manifest, he continues: " But this power, though itself impersonal, is always connected with some person who directs it; all spirits have it, ghosts generally, some men. If a stone is found to have a supernatural power, it is because a spirit has associated itself with it. A dead man's bone has with it *mana*, because the ghost is with the bone; a man may have so close a connection with a spirit or ghost that he has *mana* in himself also, and can so direct it as to effect what he desires. . . . If a man has been successful in fighting, it is not through his own qualities, but he has certainly got the *mana* of some deceased warrior to empower him, conveyed in an amulet of a stone round his neck,"[1] etc. We easily find that this definition almost word for word holds true of South American *mana* also, as described in the course of my previous investigations. It is indeed hard to realize how a notion so decidedly spiritualistic should ever have been chosen as the starting-point for the theory of a pre-animistic, or at least non-animistic, period in the history of religion.[2]

---

[1] Codrington, *The Melanesians*, p. 119 *sq.*

[2] A later student of the Melanesians, Mr. Hocart, has still more strongly emphasized the essential connection between *mana* and spirit. " Far from being pre-animistic, the word is out and out spiritualistic; it is almost, if not entirely, confined to the action of ghosts and spirits, who, whatever their origin, now go under the same name as the ghosts " (Hocart, " Religion," *Mana*, in *Man, a Monthly Record of Anthropological Science*, vol. xiv., 1914, No. 46).

If thus we may state that animism throughout is dominant in the actual religion of the South American Indians, and likewise underlies the most important of their magical practices, it may still be asked whether this animism is really primitive, or perhaps only marks a later stage in the history of their religious thought. This objection is made by Dr. Preuss, who is of opinion that the very conception of a *soul* is of comparatively late origin in the evolution of human thought. Many religious rites which actually seem to be founded on animistic ideas must still, according to Dr. Preuss, be explained on the principles of pre-animism, since the idea of souls and spirits is everywhere only a later superimposition on an earlier non-animistic notion about an impersonal magical power.[1] Now if the Indians explain, for instance, that the taboo attaching to the body of the game recently killed is due to the anger of the animal's soul, which will wreak vengeance on the hunter, it is evident that the burden of proof lies on him who asserts that this is not the original, but a secondary idea. No such proof, however, has been given by Dr. Preuss, nor by anybody else. The so-called pre-animistic theory of magic in reality has the character of a mere hypothesis, reached by an *a priori* reasoning, but hardly supported by the facts of ethnology.

It is, of course, easy to argue that there must have been an epoch in the mental development of man when he did not grasp the idea of a soul as a separate principle animating the body and surviving its death. Be this as it may, it is a matter of fact that the history of religion knows nothing of such a pre-animistic stage. The primitive conception of the soul is encountered even among the most backward tribes, and prehistoric archæology has shown that it was familiar to palæolithic man in Europe. In fact, the idea of a soul as a shadow-like human image, intimately connected with the body as its principle of life, so naturally presents itself to an undeveloped mind that it may well have been attained by our early human ancestors. There is particularly one group of biological phenomena which must have deeply impressed primeval man, just as it still impresses modern savage. What is it that makes the difference between a living body and a dead one? The greatest of all problems to the Indian, as to savage man in general, is certainly *death*. A fearful, mysterious change has taken place, as to the cause of which a theory must be found out. The cessation of the breath, of the beats of the heart and the pulse, and of other functions of life, must from the very beginning have led thinking men to the conclusion that the living body is inhabited by an invisible being which leaves it in the moment of death. In this way, for instance, the lowest Indians of South America explain the phenomenon of death. In any case, the idea that man entirely ceases to exist when his body has been rendered lifeless does not occur to a primitive mind. Just as the savage cannot form a conception about a creation out of nothing, so he cannot grasp the idea that something actually existing could ever pass away into nothing. It was no doubt by virtue of this psychological law that early man arrived at the conception of a "soul," as it is universally found among uncultured peoples.[1] Exactly to define this conception may be difficult or even impossible, but Tylor's classical definition evidently includes the most important ideas contained in it. Some anthropologists have, in primitive psychology, made a distinction between different kinds of soul: we hear about the body-soul or vital power, the breath-soul, the shadow-soul, the name-soul, and so forth. The civilized student, trying to bring the ideas of the lower peoples into a system, may be justified in making such a distinction, but it is highly doubtful whether it exists to the savage himself. Thus the Indians, as we have seen, only have a conception about one soul, which may appear in different forms, or be active in different ways. The soul is particularly seated in such parts of the body as the heart, the liver, the hair, the nails, the blood, the saliva, the bones, etc. But this soul, on the other hand, is evidently identical with the soul which leaves the body with the last breath, which appears in a person's shadow, which is hidden in his name, and which survives his death. This, among other things, may be inferred from the fact that, as far as we know the Indian languages, the same word is used to denote all these kinds of soul.

---

[1] See *supra*, pp. 155, 480.

Among the qualities of the soul there is one which I have reason especially to emphasize, because it has generally been overlooked by students of primitive religion. It possesses a mysterious *power* or

---

[1] From the same point of view Professor Nieuwenhuis has tried psychologically to explain the origin of the conception of a personal soul among the lower races. "Der animistische Begriff 'Seele' lässt sich in seiner Entstehung zwanglos durch den Grundsatz unseres ganzen naturwissenschaftlichen Erkennens, nähmlich: 'ein Etwas entstehe nicht aus einem Nichts und vegehe nicht in ein Nichts' erklären" (*Die Wurzeln des Animismus*, p. 84. Cp. p. 59 *sqq.*). The results at which Professor Nieuwenhuis has arrived with regard to the animism of the Malays are very similar to those reached by myself in South America.

energy of the peculiar kind we have learnt to know in Indian magic. Professor Wundt has drawn attention to this fact when he observes that " the pre-animistic theory of magic takes too narrow a view of animism excluding the magical influences which proceed from the body-soul."[1] This power or energy is exactly identical with what Dr. Preuss calls *Zauberkraft*, and to which, without examining its nature more closely, he erroneously ascribes a pre-animistic origin.[2] Professor Wundt is also quite right when, in his criticism of the pre-animistic hypothesis, he points out that a theory which makes religion begin with the belief in an abstract power is founded on a psychological impossibility.[3] In explaining *mana* as " that very living stuff out of which demons, gods, and souls had slowly gathered shape,"[4] pre-animists overlook that constant tendency to *personify* the object of his religious reverence which is characteristic of primitive man. On the other hand, although we can state that the Indians generally, in their religious rites and magical practices, believe themselves to be dealing with vaguely personified spirits or demons, it does not clearly appear that this is always so. In fact, the soul, as conceived by the primitive Indian, hovers between the personal and the impersonal; or, it includes two notions: the notion about a " personal " spirit, and the notion about an impersonal psychical power. It is not in all cases clear whether we have to do with the one notion or the other. And the fact that, as we have seen, the savage Indian at one moment conceives the supernatural as a more or less personal spirit or demon, the next moment, again, as an impersonal *mana*, moreover shows how impossible it is to refer the " power " to a chronologically earlier stage in the evolution of religious thought.

---

[1] Wundt, *Völkerpsychologie*, Bd. VI. *Mythus und Religion*, p. 33.

[2] When Dr. Preuss, for instance, says that the mysterious power which the Iroquois call *orenda* has nothing to do with soul or spirit (cp. *Über den Ursprung der Religion und Kunst* [*Globus*, Bd. LXXXVI., p. 321: " Das der Irokesen ' orenda ' hat mit Seele, Geist, Leben, Verstand, Gehirn oder mit physischer Kraft, Macht u. dgl. nichts zu tun "]), he evidently asserts more than can be proved. We are told that, for instance, a shaman has a particularly strong *orenda*, and that when a man bewitches another, he has used his *orenda* against him. Of one who is believed to have died from witchcraft, it is said: " An evil *orenda* has struck him " (Hewitt, " *Orenda* and a Definition of Religion," in the *American Anthropologist*, N.S. iv., 1902, p. 38). From these and other examples it seems clearly to appear that *orenda* is nothing but that *augmented psychical power* which a sorcerer has need of in exercising his art. See Karsten, *The Religion of the Jibaro Indians of Eastern Ecuador*, p. 27 *sqq.*

[3] Wundt, *loc. cit.*

[4] Clodd, *Magic in Names and in Other Things*, p. 3.

AUTHORITIES QUOTED

Abbeuille (Claude d'), *Histoire de la mission des Pères Capucines en l'isle de Maragnan et terres circonvoisines.* Paris, 1614.

Acosta (Joseph de), *The Natural and Moral History of the Indies.* Trans. ed. by C. R. Markham. 2 vols. London, 1880.

Acta Academiæ Aboënsis. Abo (Finland).

Alcedo (A. de), *The Geographical and Historical Dictionary of America and the West Indies.* Trans. ed. by G. A. Thompson. 5 vols. London, 1812-15.

Alonso Criado (Matías), *Obras escogidas de Don Juan Dominguez.* Buenos Aires, 1892.

Ambrosetti (Juan), *Los indios Caingua del alto Paraná (Misiones) (Boletin del Instituto Geografica Argentino.* Tomo xv.). Buenos Aires, 1895.

———, "La legenda del yaguareté-Ava (El Indio Tigre)," in *Anales de la Sociedad Cientifica Argentina,* Tomo xli. Buenos Aires.

American Anthropologist (The). Washington, New York, Lancaster.

Anales de la Sociedad Cientifica Argentina. Buenos Aires.

Anales del Museo Nacional de Historia Natural de Buenos Aires. Buenos Aires.

Andree (Richard), *Ethnographische Parallelen und Vergleiche,* Neue Folge. Leipzig, 1889.

Annales de la propagation de la Foi. Lyon.

Annual Reports of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution. Washington.

Annual Reports of the Bureau of American Ethnology. Washington.

Anthropologie (L'), Paris.

Anthropos. Ed. by P. W. Schmidt. Wien.

Archiv für Anthropologie. Braunschweig.

Archivio per l' antropologia et la etnologia. Firenze.

Arriaga (José de), *La extirpación de la idolatría del Perú.* Lima, 1621.

Arvelo (Martin), *Vida indiana.* Barcelona, 1910.

Atti della Societá romana di antropologia. Roma.

Azara (Felix de), *Voyages dans l'Amérique méridionale.* 4 vols. Paris, 1809.

———, *Descripción e Historia del Paraguay.* 2 vols. Madrid, 1847.

———, *Viajes por la America del Sur.* Montevideo, 1850.

Bachofen (J. J.), *Das Mutterrecht.* Stuttgart, 1861.

Baessler-Archiv für Völkerkunde. Leipzig and Berlin.

Baldrich (J. Amadeo), *Las comarcas virgenes. El Chaco Central Norte.* Rosario, 1890.

Bancroft (H. H.), *The Native Races of the Pacific States of North America.* 5 vols. New York, 1875-76.

Bandelier (A. F.), *The Islands of Titicaca and Koati.* New York, 1910.

Baro (Roulox), *Relations véritables et curieuses du Brésil.* Paris, 1651.

Barrere (Pierre), *Nouvelle Relation de la France équinoxiale.* Paris, 1743.

Bartels (Max), *Die Medizin der Naturvölker.* Leipzig, 1893.

Bates (H. W.), *The Naturalist on the River Amazons.* London, 1910.

Betanzos (Juan de), *Suma y narración de los Incas que los Indios llamaron Capaccuna.* Madrid, 1880.

Biblioteca de autores españoles. Madrid.

Boas (Franz), *Fifth Report of the Committee on the North-Western Tribes of Canada* (*Report of the British Association*). Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1889.

————, *Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians* (*Report of the United States National Museum for* 1895).

Boggiani (Guido), *Compendio de etnografia Paraguaya moderna.* Asuncion, 1900.

————, *I Caduvei* (*Mbaya o Guaycurú*). Roma, 1895.

————, " Notizie etnografiche sulla tribu del Ciamacoco," in *Atti della Societá Romana di antropologia*, vol. ii., fasc. 1. Roma.

Boletín de la Sociedad Ecuatoriana de Estudios Historicos Americanos. Afterwards: *Boletín de la Academia Nacional de Historia.* Quito.

Bolinder (Gustaf), *Ijca-indianernas kultur.* Alingsas, 1918.

————, *Indianer och tre vita.* Stockholm, 1921.

————, *Die Indianer der tropischen Schneegebirge.* Stuttgart, 1925.

Bolletino della Societá Geografica Italiana. Roma.

Boman (Eric), *Antiquités de la région Andine de la République Argentine et du Désert d'Atacama.* Paris, 1908.

Bove (Giacomo), *Patagonia, Terra del Fuoco. Mari Australi.* Genova, 1883.

Branner (J. C.), *Notes on the Botocudos and their Ornaments* (Paper read before the American Philosophical Society, November 16, 1888).

Brett (W. H.), *The Indian Tribes of Guiana.* London, 1868.

Bridges (Thomas), *Manners and Customs of the Firelanders* (*A Voice for South America*, vol. xiii.). London, 1866.

British Journal of Psychology (*The*). London.

Brühl (Gustav), *Die Culturvölker Alt-Amerikas*, New York, Cincinnati and St. Louis, 1875-87.

Bulletin de la Société de Géographie. Paris.

Campana (Domenico del), *Notizie intorno ai Ciriguani* (*Archivio per l' antropologia e la etnologia*, vol. xxxii.). Firenze, 1902.

————, *Contributo all' etnografia dei Toba* (*Archivio per l' antropologia e la etnologia*, vol. xxxiii.). Firenze, 1903.

Captivity of Hans Stade of Hesse in A.D. 1747-57 (*The*). Translated by A. Tootal and annotated by R. F. Burton. Hakluyt Society, 51. London, 1874.

Cardús (José), *Las misiones franciscanas entre los infieles de Bolivia.* Barcelona, 1886.

Casas (Bartolomé de las), *De las antiguas gentes del Perú.* Madrid, 1892.

Castelnau (Francis de), *Expédition dans les parties centrales de l'Amérique du Sud*, tomes i.-vi. Paris, 1850-57.

Castillo (Joseph de), *Relación de la provincia de Mojos.* Documentos para la Historia Geografica de la Republica de Bolivia. Compilados y anotados por M. V. Ballivián. Serie prima. Tomo i. La Paz, 1906.

Chaffanjon (J.), *L'Orénoque et le Caura.* Paris, 1889.

Chantre y Herrera (José), *Historia de las misiones de la Compañia de Jesús en el Marañon español.* Madrid, 1901.

Charlevoix (Pedro Francisco Xavier), *A Voyage to North America.* 2 vols. Dublin, 1767.

————, *Historia del Paraguay.* 2 vols. Madrid, 1910.

Church (G. E.), *Aborigines of South America.* London, 1912.

Cieza de León (Pedro), *La cronica del Perú* (*Biblioteca de autores españoles*, tomo ii.). Madrid, 1853.

———, *Segunda parte de la cronica del Perú.* Madrid, 1880.

Clavigero (F. S.), *Storia antigua del Messico.* Cesena, 1780-81.

Clodd (Edward), *Tom Tit Tot. An Essay on Savage Philosophy in Folk-tale.* London, 1898.

———, *Magic in Names and in Other Things.* London, 1920.

Cobo (Bernabé), *Historia del nuevo mundo.* 4 vols. Sevilla, 1895.

Codrington (R. H.), *The Melanesians : Studies in their Anthropology and Folk-Lore.* Oxford, 1891.

Cojazzi (Antonio), *Gli indii dell' arcipelago Fueghino.* Torino, 1911.

Cook (W. A.), *Through the Wildernesses of Brazil.* London, 1911.

Corrado (Alejandro M.), *El colegio franciscano de Tarija y sus misiones.* Quaracchi, 1884.

Coudreau (Henri A.), *La France équinoxiale.* 2 vols. Paris, 1886-87.

———, *Chez nos Indiens. Quatre années dans la Guyane Française* (1887-91). Paris, 1893.

Couto de Magalhães (J. V.), *Trabalho preparatorio para aproveitamento do selvagem e do solo por elle occupado no Brazil. O selvagem.* Rio de Janeiro, 1876.

Crawley (Ernest), *The Mystic Rose. A Study of Primitive Marriage.* London, 1902.

Crevaux (Jules), *Voyages dans l'Amérique du Sud.* Paris, 1883.

Cushing (F. H.), *A Study of Pueblo Pottery as Illustrative of Zuñi Culture Growth* (*Fourth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology*). Washington, 1886.

Dance (Charles Daniel), *Chapters from a Guianese Log-book.* Demerara, 1881.

Darwin (Charles), *The Descent of Man.* 2 vols. London, 1871.

Deniker (J.). See Hyades and Deniker.

Depons (F.), *Voyage à la partie orientale de la terre-firme*, tomes i.-ii. Paris.

Dobrizhoffer (Martin), *Geschichte der Abiponer.* 3 Bde. Vien, 1783-84.

———, *An Account of the Abipones of Paraguay.* 2 vols. London, 1882.

Eder (Franc. Xavier), *Descriptio provinciæ Moxitarum in regno Peruano.* Budæ, 1791.

Ehrenreich (Paul), *Beiträge zur Völkerkunde Brasiliens* (*Veröffentlichungen aus dem königl. Museum für Völkerkunde*, Bd. II.). Berlin, 1891.

———, *Die Mythen und Legenden der südamerikanischen Völker* (*Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, Supplement). Berlin, 1905.

———, "Mitteilungen über die zweite Xingu-Expedition in Brasilien," in *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, Bd. XXII. Berlin, 1890.

Evreux (Père Yves d'), *Voyage dans le Nord du Brésil.* Leipzig and Paris, 1864.

Falkner (Thomas), *A Description of Patagonia.* London, 1774.

Farabee (William Curtis), *Indian Tribes of Eastern Peru* (Papers of the Peabody Museum of American Archæology and Ethnology, Harvard University, vol. x.). Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1922.

Festschrift für Adolf Bastian zu seinem 70. Geburtstage. Berlin, 1896.

Figueroa (P. Francisco de), *Relación de las misiones de la Compañia de Jesús en el pais de los Maynas.* Madrid, 1904.

Finck (H. T.), *Primitive Love and Love-Stories.* New York, 1899.

Folk-Lore. London.

Forbes (David), *On the Aymará Indians of Bolivia and Peru* (*Journal of the Ethnological Society of London*, vol. ii.). 1870.

Frazer (Sir James G.), *Lectures on the Early History of the Kingship.* London, 1905.

———, *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings.* 2 vols. London, 1911.

———, *Balder the Beautiful.* 2 vols. London, 1919.

———, *Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild.* 2 vols. London, 1920.

———, *The Scapegoat.* London, 1920.

———, *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul.* London, 1922.

———, *The Dying God.* London, 1911.

———, *Totemism and Exogamy.* 4 vols. London, 1911.

Frič (Votjech), "Die unbekannten Stämme des Chaco Boreal," in *Globus*, Bd. XCVI. 1909.

Friederici (Georg), *Skalpieren und ähnliche Kriegsgebräuche in Amerika.* Braunschweig, 1906.

———, "Über eine als Couvade gedeutete Wiedergeburtszeremonie bei den Tupi," in *Globus*, Bd. LXXXIX., 1906.

Gallardo (Carlos R.), *Los Onas.* Buenos Aires, 1910.

Garcilasso de la Vega (El Ynca), *Comentarios reales que tratan del origen de los Yncas.* Lisboa. 1609.

Gerland (Georg). See Waitz (Th.).

Gilij (Filippo Salvadore), *Saggio di storia Americana.* Roma, 1781.

Globus, Illustrierte Zeitschrift für Länder- und Völkerkunde. Braunschweig.

Goeje (C. H. de), *Beiträge zur Völkerkunde von Surinam* (*Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, Bd. XIX.). Leiden, 1908.

Gomara (Francisco Lopez de), *Historia general de las Indias* (*Biblioteca de autores españoles*, tomo xxii.). Madrid, 1852.

Gonzalez Suarez (Frederico), *Historia general de la republica del Ecuador.* 6 vols. Quito, 1890-1903.

———, *Los aborigenes de Imbabura y del Carchi* (Ecuador). Quito, 1910.

Gottfriedt (J. L.), *Neue Welt und Amerikanische Historien.* Frankfurt, 1555.

Grandidier (Ernest), *Voyage dans l'Amérique du Sud, Pérou et Bolivie.* Paris, 1861.

Grubb (Barbrooke W.), *An Unknown People in an Unknown Land.* London, 1911.

Guevara (Tomas), *Psicolojia del Pueblo Araucano.* Santiago de Chile, 1908.

Guevara (José), *Historia del Paraguay* (*Anales de la Biblioteca*, tomos v., vi.). Buenos Aires, 1908-10.

Gumilla (José), *Historia natural, civil y geografica de las naciones del Rio Orinoco.* 2 vols. Barcelona, 1791.

———, *El Orinoco ilustrado.* Madrid, 1791.

Haddon (A. C.), *Evolution in Art.* London, 1895.

———, *Magic and Fetishism.* London, 1906.

Hardenburg (W. E.), *Putumayo. The Devil's Paradise.* London, 1912.

Hartland (E. Sidney), *The Legend of Perseus.* 2 vols. London, 1894.

———, *Ritual and Belief.* London, 1914.

Helm (Karl), *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte*, Bd. I. Heidelberg, 1913.

Hewitt (J. N. B.), " *Orenda* and a Definition of Religion," in *American Anthropologist*, New Series, vol. iv. 1902.

Hirn (Yrjö), *The Origins of Art : a Psychological and Sociological Inquiry*. London, 1900.

———, *Det heliga skrinet*. Helsingfors, 1909.

Hocart (A. M.), " Religion," *Mana*, in *Man, A Monthly Record of Anthropological Science*, vol. xiv. 1917.

Holmberg (H. J.), *Ethnographische Skizzen, über die Völker des russischen Amerika* (*Acta Societatis Scientiarum Fennicæ*, vol. iv.). Helsingfors, 1856.

Humboldt (Alexander von), *Reise in die Aequinoctial-Gegenden des neuen Continents*. In deutscher Bearbeitung von Hermann Hauff. 3 Bde. Stuttgart, 1860.

Hyades (P.) and Deniker (J.), *Mission scientifique de Cap Horn*, 1882-83, tome vii., Anthropologie, Ethnographie. Paris, 1893.

Im Thurn (Sir Everard F.), *Among the Indians of Guiana*. London, 1883.

Inca. Revista trimestral de estudios anthropologicos. Lima.

Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie. Leiden.

Jijón y Caamaño (Jacinto), *La religion del imperio de los Incas*, vol. i. Quito, 1919.

Joest (Wilhelm), *Tätowiren, Narbenzeichnen und Körperbemalen*. Berlin, 1887.

———, " Ethnographisches und Verwandtes aus Guyana," in *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, Bd. V. Supplement. Leyden, 1893.

Josselin de Jong (J. P. B. de), " De couvade," in *Mededeelingen der koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen*. Afdeeling Letterkunde. Deel 54, Serie B, No. 4. Amsterdam, 1922.

Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland (The). London.

Journal of the Ethnological Society of London. London.

Journal de la Société des Americanistes de Paris. Paris.

Karsten (Rafael), " La religion de los indios Mataco-Nocténes de Bolivia," in *Anales del Museo Nacional de Historia Natural de Buenos Aires*, tomo xxiv. Buenos Aires, 1913.

———, *Indian Dances in the Gran Chaco* (*Översigt av Finska Vetenskaps-Societetens Förhandlingar*, Bd. LVII.). Helsingfors, 1914-15.

———, *Contributions to the Sociology of the Indian Tribes of Ecuador* (*Acta Academiæ Aboënsis*. Humaniora, 1 : 3). Abo, 1920.

———, *Beiträge zur Sittengeschichte der südamerikanischen Indianer* (*Acta Academiæ Aboënsis*. Humaniora, 1 : 4). Abo, 1920.

———, "Mitos de los Indios Jibaros," in *Boletín de la Sociedad Ecuatoriana de estudios historicos Americanos*, No. 6. Quito, 1919.

———, *Bland indianer i Ekvadors urskogar*. 2 vols. Helsingfors, 1920-21.

———, *The Religion of the Jibaro Indians of Eastern Ecuador* (*Boletín de la Academia Nacional de Historia*, vol. iv., nums. 10 y 11). Quito, 1922.

———, *Blood Revenge, War, and Victory Feasts among the Jibaro Indians of Eastern Ecuador* (Smithsonian Institution. Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 79). Washington, 1923.

———, *The Toba Indians of the Bolivian Gran Chaco* (*Acta Academiæ Aboënsis*. Humaniora, iv.). Abo, 1923.

———, " The Colorado Indians of Western Ecuador," in *Ymer, Tidskrift utgiven av Svenska Sällskapet för Antropologi och Geografi*. Arg. 1924, H. 2. Stockholm.

Kidd (Dudley), *The Essential Kafir.* London, 1904.

Koch (Theodor), *Zum Animismus der südamerikanischen Indianer* (*Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, Bd. XIII. Supplement). Leiden, 1900.

Koch-Grünberg (Theodor), "Die Maskentänze der Indianer des oberen Rio Negro und Japurá," in *Archiv für Anthropologie*, Bd. IV. Braunschweig, 1906.

———, *Südamerikanische Felszeichnungen.* Berlin, 1907.

———, *Zwei Jahre unter den Indianern.* 2 Bde. Stuttgart, 1908-10.

———, *Vom Roroima zum Orinoco*, Bd. II., *Mythen und Legenden der Taulipang-und-Arekuna-Indianer.* Berlin, 1916.

———, *Vom Roroima zum Orinoco*, Bd. III., *Ethnographie.* Stuttgart, 1923.

Koenigswald (Gustav von), "Die Coroados im südlichen Brasilien," in *Globus*, Bd. XCIV. 1908.

———, "Die Caraja-Indianer," in *Globus*, Bd. XCIV., No. 14. 1908.

Koppers (Wilhelm), *Unter Feuerland-Indianern.* Stuttgart, 1924.

Krause (Fritz), *In den Wildnissen Brasiliens.* Leipzig, 1911.

———, "Ethnographische Forschungsreise in Zentralbrasilien," in *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, Bd. XLI. Berlin, 1909.

Kungl. Svenska Vetenskapsakademiens Handlingar. Uppsala and Stockholm.

Kunike (Hugo), "Das sogenannte Männerkindbett," in *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie.* 43 Jahrg. Berlin, 1911.

Kurze (G.), "Sitten und Gebräuche der Lengua-Indianer," in *Mitteilungen der geographischen Gesellschaft zu Jena*, Bd. XXIII.). Jena, 1905.

Laët (Joannes de), *Guilielmi Pisonis de Medicina Brasilensi libri quatuor, et Georgi Marcgravi de Liebstad Historiæ rerum naturalium Brasiliæ, cum appendice de Tapujis et Chilensibus.* Joannes de Laët in ordinem digessit et annotationibus addidit. Amstelodami, 1648.

———, *Novus orbis seu descriptionis Indiæ Occidentalis libri XVIII.* Lugd. Batav., 1633.

Lafitau (J. F.), *Mœurs des sauvages Amériquains.* 2 vols. Paris, 1724.

Lafone Quevedo (Samuel A.), *Arte de lengua Toba.* Buenos Aires, 1893.

Lehmann-Nitsche (Robert), *Études anthropologiques sur les Indiens Takshik du Chaco Argentin.* La Plata, 1904.

———, "La astronomia de los Tobas," in *Revista del Museode La Plata*, tomo xxvii. Buenos Aires, 1923.

———, "La astronomia de los Matacos," in *Revista del Museo de La Plata*, tomo xxvii. Buenos Aires, 1923.

Lery (Jean de), *Histoire d'un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil, autrement dit Amérique.* La Rochelle, 1578.

Lettres édifiantes et curieuses. Nouvelle edition. Paris, 1781-83.

Lozano (P. Pedro), *Descripción chorographica del Terreno, Rios, Arboles y Animales de las Provincias del Gran Chaco.* Cordoba, 1733.

———, *Historia de la Compañia de Jesús en la provincia de Paraguay.* 2 vols. Madrid, 1754.

Lumholtz (Carl), *Unknown Mexico.* 2 vols. London, 1903.

Man. A Monthly Record of Anthropological Science. London.

Mannhardt (Wilhelm), *Mythologische Forschungen.* Strassburg, 1884.

Marett (R. R.), *The Threshold of Religion.* London, 1909.

Markham (Sir Clements). See Molina (Christoval de), and Sarmiento de Gamboa (Pedro).

Martius (C. F. Ph. von), *Beiträge zur Ethnographie und Sprachenkunde Amerika's zumal Brasiliens.* 2 Bde. Leipzig, 1867.

———. See Spix (J. B. von) and Martius (C. F. Ph. von).

Mededeelingen der koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen. Amsterdam.

Medina (José Toribio), *Los Aborigenes de Chile.* Santiago, 1882.

Ministerio de Fomento, *Tres relaciones de antigüedades Peruanas.* Madrid, 1879.

Mitteilungen aus den deutschen Schutzgebieten. Berlin.

Mitteilungen der geographischen Gesellschaft zu Jena.

Molina (Christoval de), *Relación de las fabulas y ritos de los Ingas* (*Coleccion de libros y documentos referentes a la Historia del Peru*, tomo i. Lima, 1916.

———, *The Fables and Rites of the Yncas* (*Narratives of the Rites and Laws of the Incas.* Trans. and ed. by C. R. Markham). London, 1873.

Molina (J. J.), *The Geographical, Natural, and Civil History of Chili.* Trans. 2 vols. London, 1809.

Mooney (James), *Myths of the Cherokee* (*Nineteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, part i.). Washington, 1900.

Morúa (Martin de), *Historia de los Incas, Reyes de Peru.* Lima, 1922.

Murr (C. G. von), *Reisen einiger Missionarien der Gesellschaft Jesu in Amerika.* Nürnberg, 1785.

Musters (G. C.), *At Home with the Patagonians.* London, 1873.

Niblack (Albert P.), *The Coast Indians of Southern Alaska and Northern British Columbia* (*Annual Report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution*). Washington, 1888.

Nicholas (Francis C.), "The Aborigines of Santa Maria, Colombia," in *American Anthropologist,* N.S., iii. 1901.

Nieuwenhuis (A. W.), *Die Wurzeln des Animismus* (*Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie,* Bd. XXIV. Supplement). Leiden, 1917.

Nimuendajú-Unkel (Kurt), *Die Sagen von der Erschaffung und Vernichtung der Welt als Grundlage der Religion der Apapocuva-Guarani* (*Zeitschrift für Ethnologie,* Heft II. und III.). Berlin, 1914.

Nordenskiöld (Erland), *Einige Beiträge zur Kenntnis der südamerikanischen Tongefässe und ihrer Herstellung* (*Kungl. Svenska Vetenskapsakademiens Handlingar,* Bd. XLI., No. 6). Uppsala and Stockholm, 1906.

———, *Arkeologiska undersökningar i Perus och Bolivias gränstrakter* 1904-05. (*Kungl. Svenska Vetenskapsakademiens Handlingar,* Bd. XLII., No. 2). Uppsala and Stockholm, 1906.

———, "Ethnographische und archäologische Forschungen im Grenzgebiet zwischen Peru und Bolivia 1904-05," in *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie,* Heft I. und II. Berlin, 1906.

———, "Recettes magiques et médicales du Pérou et de la Bolivie," in *Journal de la Société des Américanistes de Paris.* Nouvelle série, tome iv., numéro 2. Paris, 1908.

———, *Indianerleben. El Gran Chaco* (*Südamerika*). Leipzig, 1912.

———, *Indianer och hvita i nordöstra Bolivia.* Stockholm, 1911.

———, *De sydamerikanska indianernas kulturhistoria.* Stockholm, 1912.

———, *Urnengräber und Mounds im bolivianischen Flachlande* (*Baessler-Archiv,* Bd. III., Heft 5). Leipzig und Berlin, 1913.

———, *Forskningar och äventyr i Sydamerika.* Stockholm, 1915.

———, "Travels on the Boundaries of Bolivia and Argentina," in *The Geographical Journal,* vol. xxi., 1903.

Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca (Alvar), *Comentarios* (*Biblioteca de autores españoles*, tomo i.). Madrid, 1852.

Orbigny (Alcide d'), *L'homme Américain.* Paris, 1839.

———, *Voyages dans l'Amérique méridionale*, tomes i.-iv. Paris, 1843.

Orton (James), *The Andes and the Amazon.* London, 1870.

Pelleschi (Giovanni), *Otto mesi nel Gran Ciacco.* Firenze, 1881.

———, *Eight Months on the Gran Chaco of the Argentine Republic.* Trans. London, 1886.

Penard (F. P.) and Penard (A. P.), *De menschetende Aanbidders der Zonneslang.* 2 vols. Paramaribo, 1907.

Petitot (Emile), *Monographie des Dené-Dindjié.* Paris, 1876.

Pigorini (Luigi), "Di una collezione etnologica della Repubblica dell' Equatore," in *Bolletino della Societa Geografica Italiana*, vol. xv. Roma, 1878.

Piso (G.). See Laët (Joannes).

Plagemann (A.), "Ueber die Chilenischen 'Pintados,'" in *Internationaler Amerikanisten-Kongress.* Ergänzungsband. Stuttgart, 1904.

Ploss (H.), *Das Kind im Brauch und Sitte der Völker.* 2 Bde. Leipzig, 1911.

Preuss (K. Th.), *Menschenopfer und Selbstverstümmlung bei der Todtentrauer in Amerika* (*Festschrift für Adolf Bastian*). Berlin, 1890.

———, *Der Ursprung der Religion und Kunst* (*Globus*, Bd. LXXXVI. und LXXXVII.). 1904, 1905.

———, *Religion und Mythologie der Uitóto.* 2 Bde. Göttingen and Leipzig, 1921-23.

Ramos Gavilán (P. Alonso), *Historia del célebre Sanctuario de Nuestra Señora de Copacabana.* Lima, 1621.

Read (D. H.), "Psychology of Animism," in *The British Journal of Psychology*, vol. viii., part 1.

Reich (Alfred) and Stegelmann (Felix), "Bei den Indianern des Urubamba und des Envira," in *Globus*, Bd. LXXXIII. 1903.

Reiss (W.) and Stübel (A.), *The Necropolis of Ancon in Peru.* 3 vols. Berlin, 1880-89.

Restrepo (Vicente), *Los Chibchas.* Bogotá, 1895.

Restrepo Tirado (Ernesto), *Los Quimbayas.* Bogotá, 1895.

Revista del Museo de La Plata. Buenos Aires.

Revista trimensal do Instituto historico y geographico do Bresil. Rio Janeiro.

Reinburg (P.), "Contribution a l'étude des boissons toxiques des indiens du nord-ouest de l'Amazone," in *Journal de la Société des Américanistes de Paris.* Nouvelle série, tome xiii., 1921.

Ribeiro de Sampaio (Francisco Xavier), *Diario da viagem.* Lisboa, 1825.

Rivero (P. Juan), *Historia de las misiones de los llanos de Casanare y los rios Orinoco y Meta.* Bogotá, 1883.

Rivero y Tschudi (J. J. von), *Antigüedades Peruanas.* Vienna, 1851.

Rivet (Paul), *Les indiens Jibaros* (*L'Anthropologie*, tomes xviii. and xix.). Paris, 1907, 1908.

Rochefort (C. de), *Histoire naturelle et morale des Iles Antilles de l'Amérique.* Rotterdam, 1665.

Rosales (Diego de), *Historia general de el Reyno de Chile.* Valparaiso, 1877.

Roth (H. Ling), "On the Significance of Couvade," in *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, vol. xii. London, 1893.

Roth (Walter E.), *An Inquiry into the Animism and Folklore of the Guiana Indians (Thirtieth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology).* Washington, 1915.

Sahagun (P. Bernardino de), *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España.* 3 vols. Mexico, 1829–30.

St. Cricq (M. de), " Voyage du Pérou au Brésil par les fleuves Ucayali et Amazone," in *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie.* Paris, 1853.

Sanchez Labrador (José), *El Paraguay católico.* Buenos Aires, 1910.

Santillan (Fernando de), *Relación del orígen, descendencia, politica, y gobierno de los Incas.* See Ministerio de Fomento, *Tres relaciones de antigüedades Peruanas.*

Sarmiento de Gamboa (Pedro), *History of the Incas* (Hakluyt Society). Trans. by Sir Clements Markham. Cambridge, 1907.

Schmidt (Max), *Indianerstudien in Zentralbrasilien.* Berlin, 1905.

———, " Reisen in Matto Grosso im Jahre 1910," in *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie,* Bd. XLIV. Berlin, 1912.

Schmidt (P. Wilhelm), " Kulturkreise und Kulturschichten in Südamerika," in *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie,* Bd. XLV. Berlin, 1913.

Schomburgk (Richard), *Reisen in British-Guiana in den Jahren* 1840-44. 3 Bde. Leipzig, 1847-48.

Schomburgk (Robert), *Reisen in Guiana und am Orinoko während der Jahre* 1835-39. Leipzig, 1841.

Schoolcraft (Henry R.), *Historical and Statistical Information Respecting the History, Condition, and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States.* 6 vols. Philadelphia, 1851-57.

Seler (Eduard), " Viaje arqueologico en Peru y Bolivia," in *Inca, Revista trimestral de estudios antropologicos,* vol. ii., No. 2, 1923.

Sievers (W.), *Reise in der Sierra Nevada de Santa Maria.* Leipzig, 1887.

Simons (F. A. A.), " An Exploration of the Goajira Peninsula, U.S. of Colombia," in *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society,* new ser., vol. vii. London, 1885.

Skeat (W. W.), Malay Magic. London, 1900.

Smet (J. de), in *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi,* xi. (1838), xv. (1843).

Smith (E. R.), *The Araucanians.* New York, 1855.

Smyth (W.) and Lowe (F.), *Narrative of a Journey from Lima to Para.* London, 1836.

Soarez de Souza (Gabriel), *Tratado descriptivo do Brasil em* 1587. Ed. F. A. de Varnhagen. Rio Janeiro, 1851.

Southey (R.), *History of Brazil.* 3 vols. London, 1810-19.

Speck (Frank G.), *The Creek Indians of Taskigi Town (Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association,* vol. ii.). Lancaster, 1907.

Spencer (Herbert), *The Principles of Sociology.* 3 vols. London, 1882-96.

Spix (J. B. von) and Martius (C. F. Ph. von), *Reise in Brasilien.* 3 Bde. München, 1823-31.

Spruce (Richard), *Notes of a Botanist on the Amazon and Andes.* Ed. by A. R. Wallace. 2 vols. London, 1908.

Staden (Hans). See *Captivity of Hans Stade of Hesse.*

Starcke (C. N.), *The Primitive Family in its Origin and Development.* London, 1889.

Stegelmann (Felix). See Reich and Stegelmann.

Steinen (Karl von den), *Unter den Indianern Central-Brasiliens.* Berlin, 1894.

Stolpe (Hjalmar), *Studier i Amerikansk ornamentik.* Ett bidrag till ornamentens biologi. Stockholm, 1896.

———, *Utvecklingsföreteelser i naturfolkens ornamentik.* (*Populära etnologiska skrifter utgivna av Riksmuseets etnografiska avdelning* 1.) Stockholm, 1911.

Stradelli (E.), *Leggenda dell' Jurupary* (*Bolletino della Societá Geografica italiana*). Roma, 1890.

Stübel (A.). See Reiss and Stübel.

Swanton (J. R.), *Social Condition, Beliefs, and Linguistic Relationships of the Tlingit Indians* (*Twenty-Sixth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*). Washington, 1908.

———, *Contributions to the Ethnology of the Haida* (*Memoir of the American Museum of Natural History, The Jesup North Pacific Expedition*). Leyden and New York, 1905.

Ternaux (H.), *Voyages, relations et mémoires de l'Amérique.* Paris, 1837.

Tertre (Jean-Baptiste du), *Histoire général des Antilles habitées par les Français.* 2 vols. Paris, 1667.

Teschauer (C.), "Die Caingang oder Coroados-Indianer im brasilianischen Staate Rio Grande do Sul," in *Anthropos*, vol. ix. Wien, 1914.

Thevet (André), *La Cosmographie universelle.* 2 vols. Paris, 1575.

Tirado (Ernesto). See Restrepo Tirado.

Tschudi (J. J. von), *Peru. Reiseskizzen.* 2 vols. St. Gallen, 1846.

———, *Die Kechua Sprache.* 2 vols. Wien, 1853.

———, *Culturhistorische und sprachliche Beiträge zur Kenntnis des alten Peru* (*Denkschriften der Kaiserl. Akademie der Wissenschaften*). Wien, 1891.

———, *Reisen durch Südamerika.* 5 vols. Leipzig, 1866-69.

Tylor (Sir Edward B.), *Researches into the Early History of Mankind.* London, 1878.

———, *Primitive Culture.* 2 vols. London, 1871.

Vacas Galindo (Enrique), *Nankijukima; religion, usos y costumbres de los salvages del Oriente del Ecuador.* Ambato, 1895.

Velasco (P. Juan de), *Historia del Reino de Quito.* 3 vols. Quito, 1844.

Villagomez (Pedro de), *Carta pastoral de exortación é instrucción contra las idolatrias de los indios del Arzobispado de Lima.* Lima, 1649.

Villavicencio (Manuel), *Geografia de la Republica del Ecuador.* New York, 1858.

Waehneldt (R.), "Exploracão da provincia do Mato Grosso," in *Revista trimensal do Instituto historico y geographico do Brasil,* Bd. XXVII. Rio Janeiro, 1864.

Waitz (Th.), *Anthropologie der Naturvölker.* 6 vols. (vol. v., part 2, and vol. vi. by G. Gerland). Leipzig, 1859-72.

Wallace (A. R.), *A Narrative of Travels on the Amazon and the Rio Negro.* London, 1853.

Waterton (Charles), *Wanderings in South America.* London, 1880.

Westermarck (Edward), *The History of Human Marriage.* London, 1901.

———, *The History of Human Marriage.* Fifth Ed. 3 vols. London, 1921.

———, *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas.* 2 vols. London, 1906-08.

Whiffen (Thomas), "A Short Account of the Indians of the Issá-Yapurá District (South America)," in *Folklore*, March, 1913.

———, *The North-West Amazons.* London, 1915.

WIED-NEUWIED (MAXIMILIAN, PRINZ ZU), *Reise nach Brasilien in den Jahren 1815 bis 1817.* 2 vols. Frankfurt-a.-M., 1820-21.

WUNDT (WILHELM), *Völkerpsychologie,* Bd. VI., *Mythus und Religion.* Leipzig, 1915.

XEREZ (FRANCISCO DE), *Conquista del Peru.* Coleccion de libros que tratan de America raros ó curiosos, tomo i. Madrid, 1891.

Ymer. Tidskrift utgiven av Svenska Sällskapet för Antropologi och Geografi, Stockholm.

ZÁRATE (AGUSTÍN DE), *Historia del descubrimiento y conquista del Peru* (*Biblioteca de autores españoles,* tomo ii.). Madrid, 1853.

Zeitschrift für Ethnologie. Berlin.

INDEX

Abipones (Paraguayan Chaco), stained their hair with the blood of oxen, 4; superstition about eyebrows, 54; shaved off the hair from the forehead (*nalemrá*), 56; wings of a vulture used as ear-ornaments, 99; other ear-ornaments, 104; piercing of lower lip, 109; tattooing of women, 190; names held taboo, 204; drums ornamented with figures of demons, 224; worship of the Pleiades, 357; believed their sorcerers to be active in meteors, 359; couvade, 436, 449

Abstinence, sexual, 148 *sq.*; observed by the victor after the slaying of an enemy, 63, 148; by the bridegroom the first night after marriage, 178 note 4, 181; by widows, 149, 184

Achachila, ancestral spirits of the Aymará, 329 *sqq.*

Ackawoi (British Guiana), lip-ornaments of wooden pins used by women among the, 108; couvade among the, 448

Adultery, liberal view of the Indians with regard to, 496; crime to be confessed in ancient Peru, 495; with a woman of royal blood, punished with death, 496

Æsthetic sense of the Indians, sociological view of, 2; ornamental art not an expression of, 200, 257

Agriculture, connection between woman and, 300; woman's prominent part in, explained, 322

Algaroba (*Prosopis alba*), a tree in the Gran Chaco, the fruits of which are important from an alimental point of view, 311; native beer of the Chaco Indians brewed from the fruits of the, 312

Alligator, teeth of, used as ornaments, 105, 124; figures of, tattooed on the face, 232

"Amazon-stones," magical virtues ascribed to, 119, 371

Amulets, of feathers and plumes, 86 *sqq.*, 95 *sqq.*, etc.; ear-, lip-, and nose-ornaments as, 103 *sqq.*; collars and necklaces as, 116 *sqq.*; stones as, 119, 362 *sqq.*; teeth and claws of wild animals as, 122 *sqq.*; bands and ligatures as, 133 *sqq.*; pubic covering and ornamental arrangements with the genitals as, 144 *sqq.*; arrows as, 160; tattooing marks as, 188 *sqq.*; indelible scars as, 194 *sq.*; ornamental patterns as, 200; figures and images as, 212 *sqq.*; masks as, 216 *sqq.*; tattooed patterns as, 230 *sqq.*; patterns of evil spirits as, 231, 239; grave-offerings as, 244 *sq.*; fragments of pottery as, 247 *sq.*; clay vessels as, 249 *sq.*; ornaments on eating- and drinking-vessels as, 254 *sqq.*; patterns engraved on rocks as, 257 *sqq.*, 262 *sq.*; animistic foundation of, 376. See also Charms

Anacondas (boa serpent), figures of, painted on walls of houses, 234 *sq.*; artificial, used in pantomimic dances, 236; skins of, used by medicine-men to control spirits of, *ibid.*; souls of sorcerers believed to reincarnate themselves in, *ibid.*, 287 *sqq.*; charms made from the bodies of, 288 *sqq.*

Ancestors, names of, given to new-born children, 204, 417 *sqq.*; souls of, reincarnated in animal beings, 123 *sq.*, 265, 435; in plants, 430, 435; transmitted to mountains and rocks, 331 *sqq.*; to heavenly bodies, 351 *sqq.*; directly transferred to their descendants, 433 *sq.*

Animals, spirits of, 265-298; teeth and claws of, used as ornaments, 122 *sqq.*; figures of, used in ornamental art, 199, 200; images of, as charms, 212; imitated in mask-dances, 214 *sqq.*; belief in the transmigration of souls into, as foundation of totemism, 265, 297, 435

Animatism, regarded as man's earliest religious notion, 498 *sqq.*; unknown in South America, 331, 363, 373, 499 *sq.*

Animism, Indian religion essentially based on, 155, 498; connection between magic and, 203, 376. See also Animals, Plants, Inanimate objects

Annihilation of the soul, effected by destroying the remains of the dead body, 33, 243 *sq.*

Ants, superstition about, 293

Ant-eater, claws of the, used as ornaments, 124 *sq.*

Anthropophagy, an act of hatred and revenge, by which the soul of the enemy is destroyed together with his body, 33

Apachitas, sacred heaps of stone in ancient Peru, 344 *sqq.*

Apapocúva-Guaraní (southern Brazil), rattle-gourds filled with seeds, magical necklaces, and other ornaments used by the, 119; their dualistic conception of the human soul, 295 *sq.*

Araucanians (Chile), blackening of the body at mourning, 8; superstition as to the shivering of the eyelids and the trembling of arms, 53; head-trophies of, 68; frontals made of the skin of slain enemies (*mañague*), 72; head-gears of the skins of animals, 73; plumes worn as head-ornaments by the medicine-men, 87; plumes worn as ornaments for war, 93; scarification of legs before marching out to battle, 161; mock capture of the bride among the, 167; totemism of the, 266 *sq.*; superstition about horse-flies, 292 *sq.*; superstition about thunderstorms, 358; birth-customs of, 443

Arawaks (Guiana, Brazil), body-painting among the, 4; ceremonies performed with girls at puberty, 12; triangular basten coverings of women, 149; sudden illness and agonizing pains ascribed to an invisible arrow, 160; funeral dance (*mariquarri*) of the, 184 *sqq.*; name-giving among the, 204; use the same word for "shadow" and "soul," 208; ornamental waist-clothes, 234; ornamented divining-stools, 238; decorated earthenware food- and water-vessels, 240; their animal totems, 282 *sq.*; their superstition about the boa serpent, 289; their plant totems, 307; hunting charms of the, 369; naming of children, 418; couvade, 441, 450; taboo of mourners among the, 476

Arecuna (British Guiana), ligatures above the ankles used by women among the, 131; personification of animals and plants, 306, 324

Arrows as magical charms, 106, 111, 160; invisible, used by wizards, 160, 305, 470, 471

Arrow-heads, painted on the cheeks, 14, 230

Arrow-poison, superstitions about, 326 *sqq.*

Arútama, ancestral spirits of the Jibaros, 325

Aryans of Europe, Earth-mother and Corn-mother of the, 299, 316

Asceticism, unknown to the savage, 174

Ashes, supernatural virtue ascribed to, 72, 191

Ashluslays (Rio Pilcomayo, Bolivian Gran Chaco), their custom of tattooing girls at puberty, 16; painting for war, 30; their custom of pulling off the hair growing on the face, 52; head-hunting, 69; annual dances, 81; ear-ornaments, 103; necklaces, 116; heads of girls veiled at menstruation, 138; festive hoods 139; their custom of bleeding arms and legs, 157; hunting charms, 211; their belief in plant spirits, 311

Avas. See Chiriguanos

Ayahuasca, sacred narcotic of the Canelos Indians, 324 *sqq.*, 473

Aymará (Peru and Bolivia), position given the dead body in the grave by the, 34 *sq.*; nefarious magic by hair-locks and nails among the, 52; pointed head-gear (*chuco*) used by the, 61; grave-offerings, 244, 245, 253 note 4; religious dancers, 268; connection between woman and the earth in the belief of the, 300; their superstitious practices at the cultivation of maize, 321; coca offerings, 326, 381; traces of ancient animistic beliefs among modern, 329; their worship of *apachitas*, 345; legend about the sun, 353 *sq.*; the *chulpa* of the, 364; animism of the, 375; fumigation of houses, 382; fetishes of burnt clay, 383; foundation-sacrifices, 387 *sq.*; confession among the, 497. See also Peruvians, ancient

Aztecs, skinning of captured enemies among the, 70

Bachofen, J. J., on the couvade, 464, 465

Bakairi (Rio Xingú, central Brazil), the pubes of girls removed at puberty among the, 55; "tonsure" used by men, 58; the same word used for "hair" and "feather" in the language of the, 79; triangular basten coverings (*uluri*) of women, 149, 233; animal masks, 217; giant drums outside the "flute-houses," 223; *Rückenhölzer* (ornamented wooden staffs), 227; ornamented frieze in the huts, 234; ornamented canoe, 238; their theory of conception, 445; use the same word for "son" and "daughter," 446; couvade, 452, 456. See also Xingú Indians

Ball-playing in connection with planting, 84

Bandelier, A. F., on the *achachila* of the Peruvians, 328; on the *apachita* of the Peruvians, 347; on sun-worship among the Incas, 351 *sq.*, 354; on the animism of the Aymará, 375; on the *tincat* (foundation-sacrifices) of the Aymará, 389, 391; on the Virgins of the Sun, 396

Bands, as ornaments, 131 *sqq.*; applied to the limbs of newborn children, 133; means of magical conjuration, 133 *sqq.*

Baragára, magical bleeding-instrument of the Bororó, 111 *sq.*, 159

Bathing, ceremonial, of newborn children, 442; to remove the taboo of blood, 482

Baure (Guarani tribe in north-eastern Bolivia), their superstition about the maize-fields, 317

Beating, ceremonial, 169. See also Lashing

Betoyes (Orinoco), magical snake-patterns of the, 231 *sq.*; witchcraft by means of venomous snakes practised by sorcerers, 292

Bina (*biena*), hunting charms of the Caribs and Arawaks, 289, 369

Birds, superstitious ideas about, 77, 123, 271 *sqq.*; souls of the dead believed to transmigrate into, 277, 279, 281, 285 *sqq.*; serve as the agents of evil sorcerers, 286, 287, 294. See also Macaw, Ostrich, Owl, Toucan

Bleeding, ceremonial, to get relief in sickness, or enhance the strength of the muscles, 156 *sqq.*; at drinking-feasts, 161, 162 *sqq.*; carried out by means of magical instruments, 159 *sq.*

Blood, strengthening power ascribed to, 4, 459; power of red paint due to its resemblance to, 41; the newborn child smeared with the father's, 459; a chief source of taboo, 481 *sqq.*

Body, natural openings of the, protected with paintings and tattooings, 4; patterns painted on the, 229; preservation of the, in order to secure the rebirth of the departed, 33 *sq.*, 243 *sq.*

Body-painting, as a protection against changes of the weather, 2 *sq.*; as a protection against insects, *ibid.*; as a protection against evil spirits, 3 *sqq.*; natural openings and uncovered parts of the body protected by, 4 *sqq.*; as a mourning custom, 7 *sqq.*; as a puberty ceremony, 9 *sqq.*; at feasts and dances, 17 *sqq.*; as a protection against disease, 22 *sqq.*; children protected against evil influences by, 23; at canoeing, 28; for war, 30 *sq.*, 39; as a means of preserving the remains of the dead, 31 *sqq.*; believed to give the body strength, 37, 39; as a protection against witchcraft, 38; believed to attract the game, *ibid.*; black, as a "sign of sorrow," 40; origin of the magic power ascribed to, 40 *sq.*; the delight in colour as a motive for, 41; as a love charm, 38, 42

Bolinder, G., on the assistance of the medicine-men at the consummation of marriage among the Ijca, 179; on the *jus primæ noctis* among the Ijca, 180; on confession to cure sickness among the Ijca, 489

Bones of the dead painted, 32 *sq.*; preserved to render the rebirth of the dead possible, 33, 243 *sq.*, 251; the soul believed to be seated in the, 504

Bororó (Rio Xingú, central Brazil), hair painted red after a death, 4 *sq.*; their burial rites, 32, 37; bows adorned with feathers, 93; feather ornaments as "signs of sorrow," 95; feathers as "medicines," 100; ear-lobes of girls pierced, 106; crescents made of the claws of the ant-eater used as ornaments, 107; magical piercing-instrument (*baragára*), 111 *sq.*; teeth and fell of the jaguar used as charms, 123; "stays" made of tree bark used by women, 140; their custom of tying up the penis, 144; black waist-bands used at menses by women, 150; scarification in mourning, 183; ornamented bull-roarers, 226. See also Xingú Indians

Botocudos (southern Brazil), their custom of blackening the body, 6; eyebrows and beard pulled off, 53; wooden plugs worn in the ear-lobes, 105, 109

Bows, adorned with feathers, 93; miniature, used at bleeding, 159 *sq.*

Buildings, rites at the foundation of, 387 *sq.*; fumigation of, 382; new, purified from evil spirits and insects, 389

Bull-roarers, ornamented magical instruments of the Bororó, 226; taboo to women and children, 15, 226, 481

Burial, bones of the dead painted and the skull bedaubed with feathers at, 32; bleeding of the mourners at, *ibid.*; offerings made at, 244 *sq.*, 378 *sq.*; "killing" of vessels at, 246 *sqq.*; destroying of the property of the deceased at, 252 *sq.*; clay pots piled up on the tomb at, 250; rites performed to intimidate the death-spirit at, 477 *sq.*

Burial-jars, decoration of, 36, 37; represent a woman's womb, 34, 244; believed to protect the remains of the dead against supernatural foes, 249; ornamental patterns painted on, 249 *sq.*; ornamented baskets used as, 251

Cachimana, "Great Spirit" of the Orinoco Indians, 310 *sq.*

Cainguá (Guaraní tribe on Upper Paraná, northern Argentine), love charms composed of vermilion of the, 42; their custom of wearing lip-ornaments (*tembetas*) 103; their custom of piercing the lower lip of newborn children, 110; their custom of wearing a strap of skin round the arms and the legs, 134 *sq.*; their belief in "man-tigers," 268; their belief in the reincarnation of souls in animals, 275; their superstition about the navel of newborn children, 461

Californian Indians, couvade among the, 438 note 4, 457

Campas (Arawak tribe in eastern Peru), their custom of rubbing their eyes with pimento before marching out to battle, 5

Cañaris (southern Ecuador), human sacrifices among the, 407

Canelos Indians (Rio Bobonaza, eastern Ecuador), body-painting among the, 38; trophies of stuffed birds, 82; magical feather crowns, 87; their superstition about menstruous women, 147; their superstition about deformed children and twins, 148; *jus primæ noctis* exercised by the demon, 180; use the same word (*aiya*) for "soul" and "shadow," 209; their superstition about beasts of the feline family, 270 *sq.*; their superstition about birds, 287; their superstition about the boa serpent, 288; their superstition about venomous insects, 293; attribute a particular sex to each kind of tree and plant, 314 *sq.*; their superstition about the arrow-poison, 327; their belief in mountain spirits, 335; their belief in water deities, 349; their superstition about the rainbow, 360; ascribe magical virtues to stones, 362 *sq.*; their hunting charms (*misha*), 369; rules observed by the father of a newborn child, 450; medicines taken by the parents of a newborn child, 476; distinction made between evil caused by witchcraft and disease, 470 *sq.*; fasting observed by the relatives of the patient, 473; distinction made between the souls of the dead and the death-spirits, 479

Cannibalism. See Anthropophagy

Capacraymi, Inca feast in the month of December, 404

Caribs (Guiana and the Antilles), the hair of girls cut and their body painted black at the first menstruation among the, 12; cut the hair of their head in mourning, 44; their custom of shaving their forehead, 59; crescent-shaped ornaments worn in the septum of the nose, 107; pins worn as ornaments in the lower lip by women, 108; teeth of wild animals worn as ornaments by girls at puberty, 126; belts of cotton worn round the ankles and below the knees by female children, 131; body and arms of menstruating girls tied round with cotton cords, 136; triangular basten coverings of the women, 149; scarification of girls at puberty, 163; trials at the initiation of chiefs, 172; initiation of warriors by lashing and scarification, 173; *jus primæ noctis*, 179; nicknames during travelling used by, 206; names changed at marriage, *ibid.*; images of evil spirits carried as amulets, 212; canoes ornamented with figures of evil spirits, 239; hunting and love charms (*bina*), 289; " Amazon-stones " worn as amulets, 371; their idea that the bearer of the eggs is man, 423; couvade, 439; the father's fasting during the couvade, 452; the bleeding of the father during the couvade, 457 *sq.*; the blood of the father rubbed into the body of the newborn child, 459

Cavinas (northern Bolivia), their idea that the spirit of the *kautschuk* tree is a woman, 307

Cepacucha, human sacrifices at the Inca's accession to the throne, 410

Chaco Indians, body-painting after a death among the, 6 *sq.*; their "club-houses," 15; their war painting, 31; marriage ceremony, 49 *sq.*; are both scalp- and head-hunters, 62, 68; scalp-dances performed by women, 69, 409; ostrich plumes used by the, 78; their custom of bleeding themselves, 156; their belief in plant spirits, 311 *sq.*; beer brewed from *algaroba*, 313 *sq.*; sun and moon personified by, 356; their ideas about witchcraft, 370; avoid shedding the blood of domestic animals, 483. See also Ashluslays, Chorotis, Tobas, Matacos, Abipones, Guaycurús, Lenguas, Chamacoco

Chacobo (north-eastern Bolivia), ornaments of toucan feathers in the septum of the nose among the, 106 *sq.*; necklaces of monkeys' teeth, 125; basten bands worn round the legs, wrists, and arms, 132 *sq.*

Chamacoco (Paraguayan Chaco), sorcerers painted with red ochre in the face, 21; sorcerers most adorned with plumes and other ornaments, 86; cinctures of human hair among the, 140

Chanés (Arawak tribe in northern Argentine), the hair of girls cut at puberty, 45; festive dress of ostrich feathers formerly used, 80; feathered dancing-staff (*yandugua*), 92; lip-button (*tembeta*) of the, 103; rattle leglets used at dances, 127 *sq.*; lips of boys pierced at puberty, 170; their ideas about animal spirits, 275 *sq.*; their national drink *chicha* or *cangüi*, 317

Charms, composed of vermilion, to attract women, 42; feathers and plumes as, 88, 90, 95; ear-ornaments as, 104 *sqq.*; whistles as, 120; frontals, girdles, and ornamental bands as, 139 *sq.*; arrows as, 159; to attract the game, 212, 289, 369; old stone implements, crystals, etc., as, 364 *sqq.*; the " Amazon-stones " as, 371; animistic origin of the power ascribed to, 501. See also Amulets

Charruas (Uruguay), mutilations of the body, practised at mourning among the, 186 *sq.*

Cherokee (Iroquoian tribe at the Alleghany Mountains, North America), their superstition about eagles and snakes, 279 note 2; their superstition about the cedar, 302; their ideas of maize spirits, 316

Chibchas (Colombia), their worship of the dead, 34; formerly head-hunters, 62; confession among the, 489

Chicha, the maize-beer, national drink of the Chiriguanos and Chanés, 317

Childbed women, painting of, 25; the venter of, tied round with cords, 135; attacked by evil spirits, 11, 145, 443; rules observed by, 437, 439, 442

Childbirth, ceremonies performed at, 25, 26, 135, 145, 339 *sqq.*, 442 *sqq.*, 449 *sq.*; fasting at, 451 *sqq.*; medicines taken at, 456 *sq.* See also Couvade, Navel-string

Children, painting of, to protect them against evil spirits, 22 *sq.*, 31 *sq.*; protected with magical ornaments, 117 *sq.*; piercing of the lips and ears of newborn children, 110 *sq.*; ceremonies performed at the birth of, 442 *sq.*; sacrifices of, 402, 403, 404, 407, 410 *sq.*; reasons why sacrificed, 413; named after animals and plants, 417; after ancestors, 418; mortality among newborn, 442

Chiriguanos (Guaraní tribe in central Bolivia), their custom of blackening their teeth, 6; ceremonies performed with girls at puberty, 12; body-painting practised by convalescents, 24; women painted in the face at the preparation of maize-beer, 25; the hair of girls cut at puberty, 45; widows scatter their hair on the tombs of their husbands, 43, 49; hair-ornament (*yattira*) used by chiefs, 58; feathered dancing-staffs used by, 92; lip-button (*tembeta*), 103, 109; magical power ascribed to the *tembeta*, 110; ceremonies at the perforation of the lip, 113; ceremonies performed with a childbed woman, 135; ornamented clay vessels used at drinking-feasts, 255; persons killed by jaguars buried with the head downwards, 268; their doctrine of metempsychosis, 275; snake-ornaments in their art, 289; traces of a belief in a corn spirit among the, 317; their belief in stone fetishes, 372; "lightning-stones," 373; "merry fields" of the, 417; legends about the Fox-god and the Armadillo-god, 426; fasting of childbed women among the, 457; ceremonial silence at drinking-feasts, 462

Chokihua, souls of dead Itonamas, inhabiting animals and inanimate objects, 276

Chonta (*chunta*), kinds of palm in tropical South America (*Guilielma*, *Bactris*, *Iriartea*), the thorns of which are used by Indian sorcerers for bewitching people, 305

Chorotis (Rio Pilcomayo, Bolivian Gran Chaco), dances of the, 11; magical character of their dances, 18 *sq.*; guests received with wailing, 27; women cut their hair on the death of their husbands, 49; use the same word for human hair, the wool of an animal, and the leaf of a tree, 79; ostrich plumes used at dances, 81; wooden plugs used as ear-ornaments, 103; magical necklaces of snails' shells used by, 116; magical wooden whistles worn round the neck, 120; magical ligatures of the, 134; head of girls veiled at puberty, 138; red hoods of woollen yarn used at feasts, 139; women wear their breasts uncovered, 142 *sq.*; believe that evil spirits attack girls at first menstruation, 145; sickly newborn children believed to be possessed by evil spirits, 147; twins regarded as unlucky, 148; arms purified from evil spirits by bleeding, 156 *sq.*; believe pains to be caused by arrow-shooting demons, 160; tattooing of women, 190 *sq.*; magical patterns painted on face, 230; clay pots filled with water placed at tombs, 251; their belief in man-tigers, 268; their belief in metempsychosis, 273; their belief in plant spirits, 311; their belief in spirits causing thunder and lightning, 359; their superstition about stones, 370; their festival of fertilization, 431; couvade among the, 444, 453; their superstition about the navel-string of the child, 461; distinction between the souls of the dead and the disease- and death-spirit, 479. See also Chaco Indians

Chuco, high, pointed hats of the Collas (Aymará), 139

Chulpa, bag of *ichu* grass used at burials by the Aymará; small buildings in which the Aymará bury their

dead; disease- and death-spirits, 245 note 3, 364, 379
Cinctures. See Girdles
Circumcision, prevalence of the custom in South America, 176 *sq.*; explanation of, 177 *sq.*
Citua, annual purification feast in ancient Peru, 484 *sqq.*
Clay, used for the fabrication of pots, believed to possess magical power, 240, 242 note 1
Clay vessels, magical power ascribed to, 240 *sq.*; ceremonial "killing" of, 242, 244, 246 *sq.*; fragments of, regarded as charms, 247 *sq.*; ceremonial offering of, at tombs, 250 *sq.*
Clothes, worn for superstitious reasons, 145 *sq.*; a protection against evil spirits, 149 *sqq.*; ornamental patterns applied to, 232 *sqq.*; offered as sacrifices, 386 *sq.*
Coca (*Erythroxylon coca*), believed to be animated by a female spirit, 319, 326; magical offerings of, 380 *sq.*
Codrington, R. H., on Melanesian *mana*, 502
Colorados (western Ecuador), their custom of painting the body, 37; rite performed to become the godfather of another man's child, 51; their superstition about venomous snakes, 293; their ideas about volcano spirits, 331 *sq.*; ideas about evil spirits inhabiting lagoons, 350; magical black stones of the medicine-men, 367; ideas about the taboo of disease, 472
Colour, the delight in, of the Indians, 41; magical qualities ascribed to, 371
Conception, Indian theory of, 414 *sqq.*, 422 *sqq.*; by animal spirits, 426; by plant spirits, 427 *sqq.*; by spirits inhabiting inanimate natural objects, 432; totemism founded on a primitive theory of, 435
Conceptional theory of totemism, 414 *sq.*
Confession, in ancient Peru, 487 *sqq.*, 491 *sqq.*; disease cured by, among the Chibchas, 490; private evils removed by, 491 *sq.*; public evils removed by, 492 *sq.*; as a purification ceremony, 487 *sq.*, 490 *sq.*; ethical aspect of, 490, 491, 493 *sqq.*; political importance of, in ancient Peru, 497
Conibos (Rio Ucayali, eastern Peru), deformation of the skulls of children among the, 61; circumcision, 177; their scar-tattooing, 194; their ideas about thunder, 359
Conjuration of spirits, women excluded from, 14; by means of feathers, 86, 88 *sqq.*; by means of rattles, 126 *sqq.*; by means of bands and ligatures, 133 *sq.*; principles of, 209 *sqq.*; in mask-dances, 215 *sqq.*, 237
Contagious magic, principles of, 201, 203. See Sympathetic magic
Corn-mother, the, among the Cherokees, 316 *sq.*; in ancient Peru, 319 *sq.*
Coroados (central Brazil), their custom of painting small children, 23; the hair of mourners cut among the, 44; festive feather dress used by the, 82; jaguars' teeth worn as ornaments, 124; venesection practised by, 159
Consummation of marriage, rites to facilitate, 179 *sq.*; deferred, 178 note 4, 181
Courtship, connected with dancing, 19; facial painting at, 19 note 1; magical ceremonies at, 127
Couvade, the male childbed, 436-467; diffusion of, 436 *sq.*; based on the idea that man is the bearer of the eggs, 445; close sympathy between the father and the child due to a close connection between their souls, 448; fasting in connection with, 451 *sqq.*; medicines taken by the father instead of by the child in, 456; bleeding in connection with, 458; duration of, 460; older theories on, 464
Crawley, A. E., on "bride-lifting" and "sexual resistance," 168 note 5; on circumcision and artificial hymen-perforation, 178 note 1; on tattooing, boring, and scarification, 195
Crevaux, J., on the Indian rock-engravings, 258
Cremation, practised to secure the rebirth of the dead, 249 note 3
Crimes, confession of, in ancient Peru, 495 *sq.*
Cross, the, as a magical symbol, 245, 250; origins of the cross-pattern, 228
Crystals, magical properties ascribed to, 159, 365, 366 *sq.*

Curses, believed to be pervaded by a magical potency, 495

Cushing, F. H., on the magical power ascribed to clay vessels by the Pueblos, 240

Dances, ceremonial character of Indian, 18 *sqq.*; at courtship and marriage, 19; performed to promote the growth of the fruits, *ibid.*, 311, 312, 320, 321, 427, 428; mask-dances, 214 *sqq.*; a kind of conjuration, 18, 216 *sqq.*

Dancing-apron, 151 *sq.*; ornaments applied to, 233

Dancing-staffs, feathered, 92; ornamented, 227

Darwin, C., on savage love of ornaments, xxiv; on the reason why among savages men are more ornamented than women, 16

Dead, the custom of painting the, 31 *sqq.*, 35 note 2; preservation of the bodies of the, to secure their rebirth, 33 *sqq.*, 243 *sq.*; spirits of the, why feared, 183, 243, 477 *sq.*; offerings to the, 244 *sq.*, 278 *sq.*; property of the, destroyed, 252 *sq.*, 474

Death, Indian theory of, 503 *sq.*; the chief source of impurity and taboo, 469, 474

Death-spirits, to be distinguished from the souls of the dead, 183, 243, 477 *sqq.*

Deer, superstitions about the, 272, 273, 276, 277, 285, 426

Defloration of brides, regarded as dangerous, 178, 181 *sq.*

Deformed children, superstition about, 147 *sq.*, 425

Demons. See Disease-demons

Déné or Tinneh (British Columbia), their belief in metempsychosis, 421 *sq.*

Disease, Indian theory of, 469 *sqq.*; body-painting a protection against, 22 *sqq.*; tattooing a protection against, 191. See also Witchcraft

Disease-demons, expelled by bleeding, 156 *sqq.*; supposed to leave the body with the sweat, 166; cause death by entering into the body, 183; introduced by the whites, 471; annual expulsion of, 484 *sqq.*

Divining-stools, ornamented, of the Arawaks, 238

Dolphin, superstition about the, 285

Doors of houses, defended against evil spirits trying to penetrate into the house, 237; ornamented with figures of spirits, 237 *sq.*

Drums, made of the skins of slain enemies, 71; magical power ascribed to, 209 *sqq.*; ornamented, 223 *sq.*

Dualistic religion of ancient Peruvians, 484, 493

Eagle, worship of the, among the Cherokees, 279 note 2; as a totem, 435

Ears, perforation of the, 104 *sqq.*

Ear-ornaments, 103 *sqq.*

Earth, worship of the, by Peruvian women, 300; worshipped at the foundation of new buildings, 387, 389; worshipped in connection with agriculture, 390 *sq.*; human blood offered to the, in order to secure an abundant crop, 407; human sacrifices made to, in order to put an end to tremors, 407; in order to promote fertility, 406 *sqq.*

Earth-mother, the, among the Incas, 299 *sq.*; among the Jibaros, 300 *sq.*; worship of, 315. See also Corn-mother

Eating, ceremonial character of, among the Indians, 252

Eclipses of the sun and the moon, ideas about, 307, 356 note 3, 493, 496 note 3

Effigies, magic of, 200 *sqq.*, 208, 212 *sqq.*

Energy, magic, ascribed to the soul, 505

Epidemics, 470 *sq.*, 493. See also Disease

Ethics, elementary union of, with religion, 486; in confession, 490 *sqq.*

Evil eye, body-painting a protection against, 28, 38; wizards believed to harm the fields by looking at them with an, 392

Eyes protected with magical painting and tattooing, 4, 5

Expulsion of evil spirits, annual, 484 *sqq.*

Facial painting as a protection against spirits, 6, 7, 13, 21, 24, 25, 26, 28, 30

Famine, an end put to, by human sacrifice, 405; by confession, 492

Farnell, L. R., on the nature of taboo, 469

Fasting, ceremonial, the victor's, after the slaying of an enemy, 63; of girls at puberty, 11, 12; in connection with the piercing of the lips, 111, 112, 113; in connection with tattooing, 190, 192, 193; in connection with couvade, 437, 439, 440, 441, 444, 449, 451; principles of, 114, 451 *sqq.*

Father, the couvade of the, 444 *sqq.*; intimate connection between the newborn child and the, 447 *sq.* See also Couvade

Feasts, religious character of the, 17 *sq.*, 79 *sq.*; of victory, after the slaying of an enemy, 63 *sqq.*, 482; death-feasts, 32, 151, 184 *sq.*, 433 *sq.*; mystery-feasts, 427 *sqq.*

Feathers, seldom used by women, 77 *sq.*; dress of, used at drinking-feasts, 80; at other feasts, 81 *sq.*; as hunting trophies, 82; decoration with, at planting, 84; at marriage, *ibid.*; at puberty, 85; exceptionally used by women at puberty ceremonies, *ibid.*; used at religious dances and ceremonies, 85 *sq.*; used by sorcerers, 86 *sqq.*; conjuration by means of, 88 *sq.*; magical instruments decorated with, 90 *sqq.*; warriors adorned with, 93 *sq.*; bows adorned with, 93; used at death-feasts, 95; worn as amulets against evil spirits, 95 *sq.*; used at foot-races, 97; girls at puberty adorned with, *ibid.*; small children adorned with, 98; marriage candidates adorned with, *ibid.*; used as "medicines," 100; not worn for æsthetic reasons, 101

Fecundity of the women, mysteries to promote, 428, 432

Feline family, superstitions about animals of the, 267 *sqq.* See also Jaguar

Fertility, ceremonies to promote, 300, 310 *sqq.*, 313, 318 *sqq.*, 391 *sqq.*; promoted by human sacrifices, 405 *sqq.*; by interring human blood in the fields, 407; by mystery-feasts, 427 *sqq.*

Fetishes, of stone, 362 *sqq.*; Huanacauri, stone fetish of the Incas, 366; stone fetish of the Earth-mother Nungüi, 368; stone fetish of the Jibaro warriors, 372; in the shape of men and animals (*mullu*), 383; animistic origin of, 376, 501

Fetishism defined, 365 note 5; animism and, *ibid.*

Finck, H. T., on savage "ornamentation," 196

Fire, graves protected against evil spirits by, 36 note 2; ceremonies with, practised after a death, 474 *sq.*

Fish, abstention from eating, 55 *sq.*; superstitious ideas about, among the Bororó, 278, 292; among the Tobas, 292; among the Canelos Indians, 473; abstention from eating, in connection with couvade, 454 *sq.*

Flattening of the head, in Peru and Ecuador, 60; east of the Andes, 60 *sq.*; ideas underlying, 61

Flowers, superstition about, 79; decoration with, at a marriage feast, 84

Flutes, made of the bones of slain enemies, 33, 71, 210; ornamented, 226; tabooed, 15, 226, 309, 311, 429; blown under palms to promote the ripening of their fruits, 309, 310, 427

"Flute-houses." See "Men-houses"

Food, taboo through the contact with disease-demons, 472 *sqq.*; through death, 252 *sqq.*, 474 *sqq.*

Foundation-sacrifices. See Buildings

Frazer, J. G., on beating or scourging as a religious ceremony, 174 *sq.*; on the principles of magic, 200 *sq.*; on the priority of magic to religion in the evolution of thought, 203; on the Peruvian worship of the Maize-mother, 319 note 2; on the human sacrifices of the Khonds, 405 note 2; conceptional theory of totemism, 414 *sq.*; on the nature of taboo, 468 *sq.*; on confession in lower culture, 490

Fruits, animated by spirits, 118 *sq.*, 312 *sq.*; intoxicating beers brewed from, 312 *sq.*

Fuegians (Tierra del Fuego), their custom of painting the hair, 4; their war painting, 30; couvade among the, 437; supposed "pre-animism" among the, 499. See also Jahgans, Onas

Fumigations, to expel evil spirits from newbuilt houses, 381 *sq.*; with tobacco, to conjure disease-demons, 382; of fields, to secure an abundant crop, 391 *sq.*; to purify the fields from evil spirits, 392

Funeral rites. See Burial

Gayacataces (River Amazon, northwest Brazil), their belief that the souls of the departed transmigrate into birds, 123, 279

Gems, the souls of people of rank believed to transmigrate into, 119; regarded as charms and amulets, 365

Generation, the Indian theory of, 33, 204, 298, 416 *sqq.*, 434 *sq.*

Genipapo (*Genipa americana*), a fruit from the juice of which the Indians prepare a black dye used for body-painting, 12, 13, 39, 40, 63, 192, 232

Genitals, covering of the, not due to a sense of shame, 141 *sqq.*; covered for superstitious reasons, 144 *sqq.*, 233

"Geometrical ornaments," derived from concrete prototypes, 198, 227 *sq.*; regarded as magical charms, 229 note 1

GERLAND, G., on tattooing in the South Sea, 196 note 3

Gesh (southern Brazil), penis-envelopes used by the, 151

Ghosts of the dead, to be distinguished from the disease- and death-demons, 183, 477 *sqq.*; believed to revisit the living in a strange disguise, 27

Girdles, applied to a woman's body as a protective charm, 135; of human hair for warriors, 39 *sq.*; adorned with jaguars' teeth, 127; used at wrestling matches, 140; ornamented, 235

Goajiros (Goajiro peninsula), totemism among the, 282

Godfather, ceremony to become the, of another man's child, 51

GONZALEZ SUAREZ, F., on the ornamented burial-jars of the Quillacingas, 250

Gourds, ornamented, 224 *sq.*; magical properties ascribed to, 246. See also Rattle-gourds

Grave-offerings, magical character of, 244 *sq.*; different categories of, 379

"Great Spirits" of the vegetation, 301, 307, 310

GRUBB, W. BARBROOKE, on the ornamented gourds of the Lenguas, 224; on the belief in the transmigration of souls among the Lenguas, 274

Guaca. See *Huaca*

Guahivos (Orinoco, Venezuela), give the corpse the position of the fœtus in the mother's womb, 33; make use of crystals to bewitch their enemies, 159; lashing of widows among the, 184

Guamos (Orinoco), smear their children with blood, 41; scarification at drinking-feasts among the, 162

Guaná (northern Chaco, Bolivia), amulets of plumes to protect the dead, used by the, 96

Guanaco, knots of the nerves of the, worn as ornaments, 118; souls of women believed to reincarnate themselves in the, 266; flutes made of the thigh-bones of the, 266 note 2

Guarani (group of tribes in Brazil, Paraguay, and Bolivia), their custom of making trophies of the heads of their slain enemies, 62; their use of lip-buttons (*tembetas*), 103; boys hardened by bloody operations among the, 175; their custom of taking the names of their slain enemies, 207. See also Tupis, Tupinambas, Tapuyas, Cainguás, Chiriguanos (Avas), Guarayús, Baure

Guaraunos. See Warraus

Guarayús (Guarani tribe in central Bolivia), mourning customs of the, 8, 183; arms and legs of newborn children tied round with cords, 132; their theory of menstruation, 146; bleeding performed by means of a small bow and arrow, 160; newborn children protected with ornamental amulets, 443; couvade among the, 448, 454, 458

Guaycurús (Paraguayan, Bolivian, and Argentine Gran Chaco), body-painting for visiting among the, 26; their custom of pulling off the eyelashes, 53; their custom of shaving off the hair from the head, 55 *sqq.*; plumes and other ornaments worn at drinking-feasts, 80; ear-ornaments used by the, 103; bleeding to cure sickness, 157 *sq.*; tattooing and scarification, 170, 190; couvade, 437. See also Abipones, Tobas, Mocobis

Guayquiries (Orinoco), decoration with feathers at marriage among the, 84; flutes ornamented with feathers, 91

Guests, paint themselves before entering into a strange house, 26; regarded as ghosts, 27; believed to bewitch the hosts, 28

Haddon, A. C., on the difference between animism and fetishism, 365 note 5; on the spirituality of savage witchcraft, 370 *sq.*
Haidas (Queen Charlotte Islands), their belief that the souls of ancestors are reborn in their descendants, 421
Hair, cut in mourning, 44 *sqq.*; of girls cut at puberty, 45; the cutting of the, after a death explained as a sacrifice, 46; regarded as the seat of the soul, 46 *sqq.*; attacked by evil spirits, 48 *sq.*; of women, why cut in mourning, 50; of girls, why cut at puberty, *ibid.*; of children, guarded to keep their soul safe, 51; removed from the face, 52 *sqq.*; removed from the genitals, 54 *sq.*; shaved off from the head, 55 *sqq.*; of small children and boys pulled off, 56 *sq.*; of warriors shaved, 57; of chiefs shaved off from the forehead, or arranged into a crest, 58; shaved off from the top of the head, *ibid.*; arranged into a pig-tail, 59; ceremonially worn loose, *ibid.*; of slain enemies worn as a charm, 140
Hair-customs, 43 *sqq.*
Hardening, a principle in the initiation of girls at puberty, 10, 162, 220; in the initiation of men, 162, 170 *sqq.*, 174 *sq.*
Hartland, E. S., on the worship of sacred cairns, 347; on the couvade, 465
Head, spirit or soul believed to be concentrated in the, 46, 138; of certain animals taboo, 46 note 2; crown of the, shaved off, 56, 58; covered for superstitious reasons, 138 *sq.*
Head-gears, used for superstitious reasons, 138 *sq.*
Head-hunting, widely practised in South America, 62; magical ideas connected with, *ibid.*, 409 *sq.*
Head-trophies, of the Jibaros, 63 *sqq.*; of the Mundrucús, 67 *sq.*; of the Araucanians, 68; of the Chaco Indians, 68 *sqq.*; become fetishes, 66, 68, 70, 409
Hearts of men, offered in sacrifice, 406, 407, 411; why offered, 408, 412
Heavenly bodies, worship of, 351 *sqq.* See also Sun, Moon, Stars, Pleiades, Milky Way
Hen's blood, manslayer purified from the taboo of blood with, 482
Herbs, offered to spirits, 380; magical properties ascribed to, *ibid.*
Hiding as a means of escaping evil spirits, 462
Hills, regarded as the seats of demons, 334 *sq.*, 344, 348
Hirn, Y., on primitive ornaments, xxv; on feather ornaments, 75; on the material basis of sympathetic magic, 201 note 2
Homœopathic magic, principles of, 201; based on animism, 203
Honesty, a native virtue of the Indians, 495
Horse, superstitions about the, 273, 274 *sq.*
Horse-flies, superstition about, 292
Hosts, paint themselves when receiving guests, 26; fear the evil eye of the visitors, 28
Huaca, sacred places in ancient Peru, 339 *sqq.*; regarded as the abodes of spirits, 344
Huanacauri, one of the principal huacas in ancient Peru, 343, 366
Huichols (Mexico), their ideas about mountain crystals, 366
Huiracoya (*uira-koua*), magical plant offered at the foundation of buildings by the mountain Indians of Bolivia, 387, 389; fumigations with the leaves of the, 391
Human sacrifice, occasions when performed, 402 *sqq.*; offered to the earth at the time of tremors, 403 *sq.*; based on the idea of a transference of power, 404; offered to prevent famine and to secure an abundant crop, 405 *sq.*, 407 *sq.*, 410; to prolong the life of the Inca, 410 *sqq.*; as a substitution, 404 *sq.*
Humboldt, A. von, on the origin of the rock-engravings, 258 note 1; on the "Amazon-stones," 371
Hunting charms, 28, 212, 289, 369
Hurons (Canada), their belief that the souls of ancestors are reborn in their descendants, 422
Hymen - perforation, artificial, 178 note 1

Içanna Indians (central Brazil), their belief in the transmigration of souls, 279
Ijca (mountain regions of Colombia), their marriage ceremonies, 179; *jus primæ noctis* among the, 180 *sq.*; confession as a means of curing sickness among the, 489
Images, magic carried out through, 200, 201 note 2, 202, 208, 212; of men and animals buried with the dead, 245
Imitation, a principle in magic, 208, 210, 216 *sq.*, 221, 227
Imitative magic, principles of, 201
Implements, regarded as possessing souls, 247; as amulets, 263
Impregnation of women, believed to take place without sexual intercourse, 424; by spirits, *ibid.*; by animals, 425 *sq.*; by plants, 427 *sqq.*; by the sun, 432; by a tree trunk, *ibid.*
Inanimate objects, Indian animism relative to, ch. xi., 328 *sqq.*
Incas of Peru, cult of the dead among the, 34; feathered lance used at feasts by the, 92; venesection in sickness, 158; names of boys and girls changed, 206; sun-worship, 351 *sqq.*; their worship of thunder and lightning, 358; theocratic constitution of the, 395 *sq.*; annual purification feast, 484 *sqq.*; confession, 487 *sqq.* See also Peruvians, ancient
Infanticide, due to superstitious ideas, 147 *sq.*
Initiations, of girls at puberty, 10 *sqq.*, 15; of boys, 170 *sqq.*, 427; of medicine-men and sorcerers, 172; of war chiefs and warriors, 172 *sqq.*
Instruments, religious or magical, 15; adorned with feathers, 90 *sqq.*; rattling, 126 *sqq.*; ornamented, 223 *sqq.*
Ipurinas (Rio Purús, western Brazil), ceremonial preparation of the bones of the dead among the, 32; symbolical capture of the bride, 168
Itonamas (eastern Bolivia), their belief in *chokihua*, spirits of the dead, inhabiting inanimate objects, plants, and animals, 276, 364

Jaguar, ideas about a "man-tiger," 267 *sqq.*; the teeth and fell of the, used as ornaments, 123; amulets against the, used by mourners, 186, 187, 188
Jahgans (Islands of Tierra del Fuego), ornaments used by the, 118; scarification in mourning among the, 182; couvade among the, 437; the mother's fasting after the birth of a child, 441; their custom of bathing newborn children in cold sea water, 442. See also Fuegians
Jibaros (eastern Ecuador), body-painting for visiting among the, 26; importance ascribed to body-painting, 38; black painting for war, 39; their custom of arranging the hair into pig-tails, 59; their head-trophies (*tsantsas*), 63 *sqq.*; armlets of iguana skin used by the, 135; ceremonial wrestling at feasts, 166; figures of spirits painted on the doors of houses, 237 *sq.*; ascribe souls to weapons, implements, and utensils, 247; their ideas about tiger-demons, 270 *sq.*; myths about animals which were formerly men, 284; superstitions about animals and birds, 284 *sqq.*; superstitions about reptiles, 287 *sq.*; their belief that venomous snakes are possessed by the souls of wizards, 291; their superstition about venomous insects, 293; their Earth-deity Nungüi, 300 *sq.*; their ideas about plant spirits, 304 *sq.*; attribute sex to trees and plants, 314 *sq.*; their narcotic drink *natêma*, 324; their arrow-poison, 327; their belief in volcano spirits, 333; demons of the hills, 334; spirits inhabiting rapids and cataracts, 349 *sq.*; myths about the sun and the moon, 355 *sq.*; spirits of thunder and lightning, 360; stone charms (*namúra*) used by the medicine-men, 367; sacred stone of the Earth-mother (*nantára*), 368; "lightning-stones," 372; fumigations of newbuilt houses, 381 *sq.*; their belief in wizards doing harm to the fields with an evil eye, 391 *sq.*; magical power ascribed to head-trophy, 409 *sq.*; their system of name-giving, 419; belief in the rebirth of the departed, 420; their ideas about conception, 422; rules of diet observed by the father after

the birth of a child, 454 *sq.*; their "feast of the children," 460; retired life of the manslayer, 463; fasting in connection with important occupations, 466; distinction made between "witchcraft" and "disease," 470; distinction made between the souls of the dead and disease-bringing demons, 479; their reluctance to shed the blood of domestic animals, 483

Jijón y Caamaño, J., on the Peruvian *huacas*, 339; on the Peruvian *apachitas*, 346

Joest, W., on tattooing and body-painting, xxiv, 2; on the reason why the perforation of ears and lips is performed by the medicine-men, 114 *sq.*; on circumcision, 177 note 3

Josselin de Jong, J. P. B. de, on the couvade, 463 note 3

Juris (Rio Japurá, north-west Brazil), facial paintings and feather ornaments used at feasts, 83; their custom of applying ligatures to the arms and the legs, 132; *jus primæ noctis* among the, 179; families and subordinate tribes take their names from animals and plants, 281

Jus primæ noctis, 179 *sqq.*; explanation of the custom, 181 *sq.*

Kafirs (South Africa), their ideas about thunderstorms, 500 and note 2

Karayá (eastern Brazil), body-painting as a protection against mosquitoes, 3; paint the body black in mourning, 7; guests and hosts painted for a visit, 26; strangers suspected to be ghosts of the dead revisiting their relatives, 27; bodies of the dead painted and covered with feathers, 32; arms and legs of small children covered with down, 98; lip-ornaments used by the, 112; arms and thighs of newborn children tied round with strings, 131 *sq.*; women cut their hair in mourning, 138; armlets of jaguar's and wild-cat's skin used at feasts, 140; their custom of tying a cord round the prepuce, 151; scarification and blood-letting, to cure sickness or enhance the muscular strength, 158; scarification and cutting of the hair in mourning, 182; animals imitated in mask-dances, 219; fishing and hunting expeditions celebrated with mask-dances, 222; footstool adorned with feathers, 238

Kaschirí, manioc-beer, intoxicating magical drink of the Brazilian Indians, 20, 212, 213, 256, 315 *sq.*, 427, 428, 433

Káua (Rio Uaupés, north-west Brazil), rattles for children, 128; their mask-dances, 214, 217, 237; ornament the walls of their houses with figures of men and animals, 235; their phallic dances, 432

Khonds (northern India), human sacrifices to the earth among the, 405 note 2

Kidd, D., on the belief in thunder spirits among the Kafirs, 500 note 2

"Killing" of clay vessels, ceremonial, 242; at burials, 246 *sqq.*

King, divine, of the ancient Peruvians, 354 *sq.*, 395 *sq.*, 412, 493, 496

Kobéua (north-west Brazil), prophylactic painting of children among the, 22; women assisting at delivery painted red, 26; rattle-gourds ornamented with feathers, 90; bones of dead ancestors consumed, 212; big feather ornaments (*kangatára*) formerly used instead of masks, 214; their masks, 217; their ornamented rattle-gourds, 225; butterfly demon imitated in mask-dances, 260; their belief that medicine-men are able to change into jaguars, 269; animal demons represented in mask-dances, 280; phallic dance among the, 432

Koch-Grünberg, Th., on hair-cutting after a death, 46; on ceremonial mutilations after a death, 153; on Indian ornamental art, 200; on "animal dances without masks" among the Kobéua, 212 *sq.*; on the significance of mask-dances, 215; on the mask-dances of the Káua, 237; on the origin of rock-engravings, 256 *sq.*; on animals and plants in the mythology of the Guiana Indians, 306 *sq.*; on the Yurupary myth, 309; on the reasons for excluding women from the mysteries, 429 note 2; on the significance of the Yurupary mysteries, 429 note 3

Koppers, W., on the primitiveness of the Fuegians, xxxii note 1; on the couvade among the Jahgans, 437
Kuliséhu Indians (central Brazil), tonsure used by the, 57; piercing of the ear-lobes of boys, 106; ornamented bull-roarers, 226
Kunike, H., on the diffusion of the couvade in South America, 436 *sq.*; on the significance of the couvade, 465
Kurétu Indians (north-west Brazil), symbolical capture of the bride among the, 168; ceremonial breaking of clay vessels among the, 246
Kwakiutl (British Columbia), ornaments of cedar bark used at the dances of the secret societies among the, 303

Lances made of *chonta* wood believed to possess magical power, 305
Lashing, ceremonial, of girls at puberty, 164 *sq.*, 169; of young men at puberty, 171; of war chiefs and sorcerers, 172 *sqq.*; of bridegroom, 179 *sq.*; of widows before they are allowed to remarry, 184; of mourners, 184; at the Yurupary mysteries, 427 *sqq.*; as a purification ceremony, 169, 174 *sq.*
Law, criminal, of the Incas connected with their demonology, 496
Lenguas (Paraguayan Chaco), blacken the body in mourning, 8; their harvest-dance *kyaiya*, 20; rub the knees and ankles of their children with grease of the ant-bear, 23; cut the hair and cover the head in mourning, 44; *yanmana*-feast at the puberty of girls, 83; their feathered magical head-dress, 98; ear-disks worn by the, 103; mourners closely muffled up when entering a new village, 138; pretended stealing of the bride at marriage feast, 168; their custom of taking another name after the death of a relative, 205; regard manuscripts and printed paper as charms relating to the whites, 207; reluctant to have their photographs taken, 209; use wax images of animals as charms in hunting, 212; mask-dance at *yanmana*-feast, 220; their ornamented gourds, 224; superstition about old pottery, 248; mourners secluded with regard to their meals, 258; their ideas about animal spirits, 274; their ideas about the Milky Way, 357; their ideas about the rainbow, 361; purify the village with fire after a death, 475; make a distinction between the souls of the dead and the death-spirits, 477 *sq.*
Ligatures applied to the arms and the legs, 131 *sq.*, 134 *sqq.*; magical character of, 133 *sq.*, 135 *sq.*, 137
Lightning, animistic ideas about the, 358 *sqq.* See also Thunder
"Lightning-stones," superstitious ideas about, 372 *sq.*
Lips, perforation of the, 110 *sqq.*, 175
Lip-ornaments, 103, 108 *sqq.*, 112 *sq.*; more used by men than by women, 129
Llama, the Peruvian sheep, a sacred animal, 267; the animal most commonly sacrificed, 393 *sq.*
Love charms, the red painting as a, 38, 42; prepared from the teeth of the dolphin, 285 note 1; prepared from the eyes of the anaconda, 288; obtained from the carcase of dead snakes, 289

Macaw (*Ara ararauna*, *A. hyacinthinus*), transmigration of souls into the, 277, 278, 280; feathers of the, used as ornaments, 85, 94, 95, 279, 284; believed to carry the "arrow" of sorcerers, 286, 287; "totem" of the Bororó, 297
Machicui (Paraguayan Chaco), black feathers as amulets against evil spirits, 95 *sq.*
Macusis (Arawak tribe in British Guiana), body-painting for war, 30; magical virtue ascribed to hair, feathers, teeth, and claws of animals, 48; bands applied to the ankles, 131; women regarded as unclean during menstruation, 146; bleeding by means of a crystal, 159; their arrow-poison, 326, 327; couvade, 440; parents of the newborn child regarded as unclean, 458
Magic, theory of, 200 *sqq.* See also Contagious magic, Homœopathic magic, Imitative magic, Sympathetic magic
Maicoma, narcotic drink of the Jibaros, prepared from the rind of the bush *Datura arborea*, 325, 326

Maize, smearing of the body with paste made of, 24; spirit of the, 313, 316 *sqq.*; dieting after the sowing of, 466; ceremonies observed at the cultivation of, 316, 317 *sqq.*
Maize-mother of the Peruvians, 318 *sqq.* See also Corn-mother
Makunas (north-west Brazil), piercing of the ear-lobes, the septum of the nose, and the lip among the, 105 *sq.*
Malays, black magic by means of wax images among the, 203 note 2
Maloca, big communal house of the Brazilian Indians, 433
Mama, (1) the Quichua name for "mother." See Mamacocha, Mamacuna, Mamazara, Pachamama. (2) The name of the Ijca for a medicine-man, 179, 180, 489
Mamacocha, the Peruvian "Mother of the waters," 350
Mamacuna ("The Mothers"), the Virgins of the Sun at Cuzco, 396
Mamazara, the Peruvian "Maize-mother," 318, 319, 320
Man and animals, intellectually and morally on a footing of equality with each other, 284, 426
Mana, impersonal supernatural power ascribed to persons and things; in animals, 267, 501; in plants, 302, 312, 326, 501 *sq.*; in inanimate objects, 501, 502; in parts of the human body, 483, 501; connection between the soul and, 302, 312, 328, 501; Melanesian, 500, 502; taboo and, 468 *sq.*, 483
Manaos (northern Brazil), amulets of claws and feathers for children, 117
Manioc (*Manihot aipi*), spirit of the, 313 *sqq.*; ceremonies observed at the planting of the, 315
Manioc-beer, magical ideas connected with the, 315 *sq.*
Manioc-feasts, 313, 315
Männerhaus of the Bakairi, 231. See also Men-houses
Mantas (ancient Peru), *jus primæ noctis* among the, 182
Mapoyas (Orinoco), their ideas about men transformed into stone after death, 337; believe themselves to be descended from a rock, 375
Marauhas (north-west Brazil), ear- and lip-ornaments of the, 104; birth-customs, 111; wear band-ornaments round the ankles, 135; name-giving, 418
Marett, R. R., on stone-worship, 363 note 1; on the connection between taboo and *mana*, 469; on primitive witchcraft, 472; on pre-animism and "animatism," 498 *sq.*
Mariquarri, mourning- and funeral-ceremony of the Arawaks, 184 *sqq.*
Marriage ceremonies, 84, 167 *sqq.*, 179 *sqq.*, 427 *sqq.*
Masks, of the Káua and Kobéua, 217; of the Bakairi, *ibid.*; representing the *merêschu*, 217 *sqq.*; of the Onas, 219 *sqq.*; of the Lenguas, 220; magical power ascribed to, 217 *sqq.*
Mask-dances, 214-222; magical significance of, 214, 216 *sq.*; external appearance of spirits imitated in, 216 *sq.*; sounds and movements of spirits imitated in, 221; occasions when performed, 221 *sq.*
Matacos (Argentine and Bolivian Gran Chaco), women blacken their face in mourning, 7; ceremony performed with girls at puberty, 12; their war painting, 30; hair growing on the face pulled off, 52; scalp of slain enemy used as drinking-cup, 69; use ostrich feathers as head-ornaments and as amulets, 99; facial painting and necklaces used as magical protection, 116; their idea that menstruous women are attacked by evil spirits, 145; mysterious pains ascribed to an arrow-shooting demon, 160; tattooing among the, 190; their ideas about plant spirits, 311; personification of the sun and the moon, 356; make a distinction between the souls of the dead and the disease- and death-demon, 479
Maternal descent, 464 *sq.*
Mauhés (north Brazil), operation with poisonous ants performed with young men before marriage, 173 note 1; women tattooed during pregnancy, 192
Maxurunas (north Brazil) piercing of the ears and lips of children, 111
Medicines, obtained from the animal kingdom, 267, 328, 376, 501; from the vegetable kingdom, 322, 376, 501; from the mineral kingdom, 364, 371, 376, 501; animistic origin of, 501

Medicine-men (sorcerers), facial painting common among the, 21 *sq.*; feathers and other ornaments especially worn by the, 86 *sqq.*; tattooing, circumcision, and bleeding usually performed by, 114 *sq.*; initiation of, 172 *sq.*; *jus primæ noctis* exercised by the, 179 *sq.*, 181; fighting with evil spirits, 210 *sq.*; make use of mountain crystals in their magic art, 366; black or white stones used by the, 367 *sq.*, 370, 371; names of newborn children given by the, 418, 421; confession in sickness made before the, 489

Melanesian *mana*, definition of, 502

Men-houses (" Flute-houses ") in Brazil, 14 *sq.*, 231, 481; taboo to women and children, 15, 481

Menstruation, ideas about, 10 *sq.*, 145 *sq.*

Menstruous women, regarded as unclean, 10 *sqq.*, 146, 484; attacked by evil spirits, 10 *sqq.*, 126, 145 *sqq.*; painting of, 12 *sqq.*; decorated with teeth of wild animals, 126; hair of, cut off, 44 *sq.*; scarified and lashed, 163 *sqq.*

Meréschu, a fish of the species *Serrasalmo*, which plays an important part in the ornamental art of the Xingú Indians, 217 *sqq.*

Metempsychosis, the Indian belief in, 33, 72, 122, 265, 374, 416 *sqq.*, 420 *sqq.*; the foundation of totemism, 283, 375, 414, 435

Meteors, animistic ideas about, 359, 360, 362, 372

Method of investigation, xxvi *sqq.*

Milky Way, ideas about the, 357

Miranhas (Brazil), the custom of the women of blackening their teeth, 6; their nose-ornaments, 107

Mirrors regarded as charms, 104

Misha, hunting charms of the Canelos Indians, 369

Mock capture of the bride, 167 *sqq.*

Mocobis (Guaycurú tribe in the Argentine and Bolivian Gran Chaco), 56 note 4; hair-customs of the, 55

Mojos Indians (central Bolivia), initiation of sorcerers by scarification among the, 175; ceremony after the killing of a jaguar, 242

Moluches (Argentine pampa), their animal totems, 267; their ideas about the Milky Way, 357

Monkeys, teeth of, made into necklaces, 125; regarded as reincarnations of human souls, 125, 276, 283, 284; totems of the Arawaks, 283

Moon, worshipped as one of the *achachilas* of the Peruvians, 351; Koati, " Island of the Moon," 353; believed to be more powerful than the sun, 355; worship of the, among the Chaco tribes, 356

Moors of Morocco, magical sacrifice among the, 377

Moropas (north Bolivia), their ideas about the deer, 276

Mortality of newborn children, 442

Mosetene Indians (north-east Bolivia), their belief in the reincarnation of the dead in animals, 276

Mother, rules imposed upon the, after the birth of a child, 441, 443 *sq.*

Mother-right, supposed to have preceded father-right, 464; origin of, 465

Mountain worship, in western South America, 329 *sqq.*; in Guiana, 335 *sqq.*

Mourners, have the face blackened, 6 *sqq.*; have the hair cut, 43 *sq.*; veiled, 138; wear bands round the head, 138 *sq.*; scarified, 182 *sq.*; lashed, 184 *sqq.*; mutilated, 186 *sqq.*; secluded and regarded as taboo, 253, 474 *sqq.*

Mundrucús (Rio Tapajoz, Brazil), their mourning customs, 44; head-hunting, 62, 67 *sq.*; their feather ornaments, 83; ornaments composed of the claws of the ant-eater, 125; name-giving, 418; couvade, 445

Muras (Rio Madeira, Brazil), use ornaments composed of the claws of the ant-eater, 125; *parica*-snuff taking and flagellation at the initiation of young men at puberty, 170

Murder, a crime to be confessed in ancient Peru, 495

Mutilations, ceremonial, ch. vi., 153 *sqq.*

Nails, superstitious ideas about, 50 *sq.*

Names, superstitious ideas about, 204 *sqq.*; held secret, 204 *sq.*; of the dead taboo, 205; changing the, on certain occasions, 205 *sq.*

regarded as vehicles of the soul, 203, 204, 207, 417; of animals, plants, and inanimate objects given to newborn children, 417 *sqq.*; of ancestors given to children, 417 *sq.*

Name-giving, believed to protect a child against disease and evil spirits, 204; throws light on Indian belief in metempsychosis, 417 *sq.*, 419 *sqq.*

Namúra, magical stones used by the medicine-men of the Jibaros, 367

Nantára, sacred stone of the Earth-mother Nungüi which is believed to give luck in agriculture, 368

Napo Indians (eastern Ecuador), body-painting as a charm against illness, 37 *sq.*; clothing of the, supposed to be an embellishment, 143; superstitious ideas about menstruous women, 147; their ideas about demons of the hills, 335; their ideas about demons operating in thunder, lightning, and the rainbow, 359 *sq.*; crystals used by sorcerers throwing spells upon their enemies, 367; magical harpoons of *chonta* used by, 305

Natéma, narcotic drink of the Jibaros, prepared from the vine *Banisteria caapi*, 324, 367, 368. See also *Ayahuasca*

Navel-string of a newborn child, superstitious ideas about, 460 *sqq.*; must not be cut with an iron instrument, 461; carefully guarded, 461 *sq.*

Necklaces, regarded as amulets, 116 *sqq.*

Nicaragua, sacred cairns in, 344

Nicknames used to conceal the real names, 206

NIMUENDAJÚ-UNKEL, K., on the dualistic conception of the soul held by the Apapocúva-Guaranis, 295 *sq.*

NORDENSKIÖLD, ERLAND, on the "real medical art" of the Indians, 115 note 2; on the grave-offerings of the Aymará, 253 note 4; on the Indian fear of old sculptured stones, 264; on the "lightning-stones" of the Chiriguanos, 373

Nose-bear (*Nasua rufa*), superstitious ideas about the, 285

Nostrils, evil spirits believed to enter into the body through the, 5

Nungüi, Earth-mother of the Jibaros, 300 *sq.*; appealed to at agriculture, 315; sacred stone of, 368

Offerings, to the dead, 244 *sq.*, 378 *sq.*; unbloody, 380; evil spirits kept off by, 380, 381 *sq.*; of coca, 381; of tobacco, 382; of figures of men and animals, 383; of sea-shells, to the springs, 383 *sqq.*; to the sea-god, 385 *sq.*; of woollen clothes, 386; at the foundation of new buildings, 387, 388; to the earth, 391 *sq.* See also Sacrifice

Ojanas (Arawak tribe in Surinam), magical scarification and tattooing among the, 189

Omaguas (Marañon, western Brazil), artificial deformation of the skull among the, 60

Onas (mainland of Tierra del Fuego), body-painting as a protection against the changes of the weather, 3; feather charms at foot-races, 97; cutting of the hair and scarification at mourning, 182; pieces of guanaco skin as charms in hunting, 211; their belief in the transmigration of souls into objects and phenomena of nature, 219; transmigration of souls into animals, 266; mountain worship, 333 *sq.*; worship of the sun, the moon, and the stars, 334, 356. See also Fuegians

Ornaments, savage love of, xxiv; character of primitive, *ibid.*; feather, 75 *sqq.*; for the ears, lips, and nose, 102 *sqq.*; for the neck and the arms, 118 *sqq.*; rattle, 126 *sqq.*; used by both sexes, 128 *sq.*; restricted to one sex, 16 *sq.*, 77, 129; fixed, 131 *sqq.*; diagrammatic, 198 *sq.*; geometrical, 199 *sq.*, 227 *sq.*

Ornamental art, ch. vii., 198 *sqq.*, ch. viii., 223 *sqq.*; magical character of, 264

Ornamental patterns, applied to magical instruments, 209; to masks, 217 *sq.*; to drums, rattle-gourds, flutes, etc., 223 *sqq.*; to body and clothing, 229 *sqq.*; to the walls of houses, 234 *sqq.*; to pieces of furniture, 238; to canoes and paddles, 238 *sq.*; to pottery, 240; to burial jars, 248 *sqq.*; to food- and water-vessels, 252; to mountains and rocks, 256 *sqq.*

Ostrich, souls of men believed to transmigrate into the, 271 *sqq.*

Otomacs (Orinoco), regard rocks as their ancestors, 337; their belief that after death the body or skeleton is again turned into stone, 338

Owl, superstitious ideas about the, 276, 286

Oyampi Indians (Rio Oyapok, French Guiana), wear designs representing animals and demons painted on the body, 231

Pachamama, the Peruvian Earth-mother, 299 *sq.*, 322, 386, 390 *sq.*

Pains, magically hardening effects of, 174 *sq.*

Painting of the body. See Body-painting

Paiwari, manioc-beer, native beer of the Guiana Indians, drunk at religious feasts, 185, 214, 315

Palms, animistic ideas about, 304 *sq.*

Paltay (*Persea gratissima*), festival of the ancient Peruvians to promote the growth of the, 431 *sq.*

Paravillanas (Brazil), circumcision among the, 176

Paressi-Kabiji (southern Brazil), youths initiated for manhood by a feat of strength, 166; ornamented gourds of the, 254

Passé (north-west Brazil), *jus primæ noctis* among the, 179

Patagonians (Argentine), body-painting as a protection against the changes of the weather, 3; blackening of the body at mourning, 8; white body-painting for sorcerers, 21; ornaments used by sorcerers at dances, 127; bleeding as a purification, 157; medicine-man bled before he proceeds to perform his office, 175 *sq.*; medicine-man fighting with the demon, 210; the newborn child smeared with gypsum, 443

Paternity, Indian ideas about, 423, 424, 445 *sq.*, 464

Pawnees (Nebraska, North America), human sacrifice among the, 406

Payaguas (Paraguay), bleeding at drinking-feasts, 161

Penis-envelopes used by Brazilian Indians, 150 *sq.*

Perforation of the lips and the ear-lobes, 110 *sqq.*; instruments used at, 111 *sq.* (Bororó), 112 (Karayá), 113 (Tapuyas, Chiriguanos)

Perspiration as a means of curing sickness, 166

Peruvians, ancient, sacred paste of mashed maize smeared on the body and the face, 24; customs with the hair and nails of children, 51; ornamental bands for the arms and the legs, 137; nefarious magic practised through images, 202; worship of the Maize-mother, 318 *sqq.*; worship of the Coca-mother and the Potato-mother, 319 *sqq.*; worship of ancestral spirits (*achachilas*) inhabiting volcanoes, 332; worship of *huacas*, 339 *sqq.*; worship of sacred cairns (*apachitas*), 344 *sqq.*; sun-worship, 351 *sqq.*, 397; worship of thunder and lightning, 358, 397; worship of the rainbow, 360; worship of fetishes and amulets (*conopas*), 369 *sq.*; offerings, 380; offerings of sea-shells to springs, 383 *sqq.*; offerings to the sea-god, 385 *sq.*; offerings of clothes, 386 *sq.*; sacrifices of animals, 393 *sq.*; their theocratic constitution, 395 *sq.*; magical character of their sacrifices, 397 *sqq.*; their ritual of sacrifice, 399 *sqq.*; human sacrifices, 401 *sqq.*; human sacrifices to secure an abundant crop, 405 *sqq.*; sacrifices of children to secure a prolonged life for the Inca, 410 *sqq.*; name-giving, 419; festival of fertilization, 431 *sq.*; customs practised after the birth of a child, 438; superstition about the navel-string of newborn children, 462; annual purification feast *citua*, 484 *sqq.*; confession, 487 *sqq.*; conception of sin, 490 *sqq.*; their dualistic religion, 493 *sq.*; crimes, 495 *sq.*; theonomic morality, 496. See also Incas

Phallic dances of the Káua and Kobéua, 432 *sq.*

Phallus, the, as a charm, 239, 240

Piapocos (Venezuela), couvade among the, 453, 457

Piaroas (Orinoco), ceremonies with girls at puberty, 12; ceremony

of expelling demons from a new-built house, 88 *sq.*; lashing of girls at puberty, 164 *sq.*; their belief in metempsychosis, 281 *sq.*
Pleiades, worship of the, 357
Polynesian *tabu*, 468
Potato-mother, Peruvian worship of the, 319, 320
Pottery, magical powers ascribed to, 240 *sq.*; ornamental patterns painted on, 248 *sqq.*, 252
Prayer, to the springs, 385; to Viracocha, 386; at the foundation of new buildings, 387; for the health of the Inca, 397; for victory over enemies, 398; to the Creator, Sun, Thunder, and Lightning, 400
Preuss, K. Th., on hair-cutting after a death, 46; on human sacrifices and self-mutilations after a death, 153; on animals and plants in Uitóto mythology, 306; on magical character of Indian drinking-bouts, 312; on pre-animism, 155, 484 note 2, 505.
Puberty ceremonies, with girls: 9 *sqq.* (painting of the body); 44 *sq.* (cutting of the hair); 136 (application of cords); 163 *sqq.* (lashing and scarification); 177, 178 (circumcision, defloration); 190 *sqq.* (tattooing); with boys: 57 (pricking of the body, dressing of the hair); 111, 113 (piercing of the lip and the insertion of a lip-button); 166 (wrestling, a feat of strength); 170 *sq.* (scarification, lashing)
Pubic covering, origin of, 141 *sqq.*, 149 *sqq.*
Pueblos (Arizona), animistic ideas held about clay vessels, 240 *sq.*

Quichuas (Peru and Bolivia), covering of the head at mourning, 138; "sun-worship," 215; their grave-offerings, 245, 253 note 4; their belief in the "man-tiger" (*uturúncu*); "physiological" connection between women and the earth in the belief of the, 300; superstitious practices at the cultivation of maize, 321 *sq.*; coca offerings to the evil spirits of precipices, 326; their worship of *achachilas*, 329 *sq.*; worship of sacred cairns, 345 *sq.*; worship of *chulpa*-spirits, 364; coca offerings to avert evil influences, 381; fumigation of houses, 382; fetishes in the form of men and animals (*mullu*); sacrifices at the foundation of new buildings, 388
Quillacingas (Ecuador), crescent-shaped golden ornaments worn in the septum of the nose, 107
Quinoa-mother, Peruvian worship of the, 319

Rainbow, ideas about, 359
Rapids, regarded as seats of evil spirits, 260
Rattle-gourds, adorned with feathers, 90 *sq.*; ornamental patterns applied to, 224 *sq.*
Rattle-lances used at the Yurupary dances, 91
Rattle-ornaments, 126 *sqq.*; only used by men, 130
Red, the favourite colour of the Indians, 40 *sq.*
Reincarnation of human souls. See Metempsychosis
Reptiles. See Anaconda, Snakes
Roads, sacrifices to, 403 *sq.*
Rocks, regarded as the seats of spirits, 261, 335 *sqq.*; men "descended" from rocks, 338
Rock-engravings, geographical diffusion of, 256; represent the elements of picture-writing, 257 *sq.*; magical and religious character of, 258 *sqq.*
Roocooyen (French Guiana), small flutes of bones hung round the neck of the dead, 120; scarification and bleeding, 157; custom of burning the dead, 249 note 3; clay vessels broken after a death, 252 *sq.*
Roth, H. Ling, on the couvade, 465
Roth, W. E., on the feathered rattle-gourds of the Arawak medicine-men, 90; on the disease-bringing "arrow" of the sorcerers, 160; on the ornamented divining-stools of the Warraus and Arawaks, 238; on the petroglyphy of the Guiana Indians, 335; on Guiana legends about men turned into stone, 337; on the transmigration of souls, 358; on the magical stones and seeds contained in the rattle-gourds of the Guiana Indians, 370; on the "Amazon-stones," 371; on the animistic ideas of the Guiana Indians, 374 *sq.*; on the Carib legend according to which the

egg has originally belonged to man, 423; on traces of a belief in the production of children without sexual intercourse, 425; on the couvade among the Caribs, Arawaks, and Warraus, 441, 450, 458, 460 *sq.*

Sacrifice, magical, ch. xii; of animals, 393 *sqq.*; human, 401; as a transference of power, 404; to secure an abundant crop, 405 *sqq.*; to prolong the life of the Inca, 410 *sqq.* See also Offerings
Salivas (Orinoco), 178; circumcision among the, 176; their rock-engravings, 259
Salt, evil spirits expelled by throwing, 191 note 1; prohibition to eat, in preparation for a festival, 431; the relatives of the patient forbidden to eat, 473
Scalping, little practised in South America, 61 *sq.*; in the Gran Chaco, 68 *sq.*
Scalp-dances, 68 *sq.*
Scarification, as a purification ceremony, 153, 156 *sqq.*; of girls at puberty, 163 *sqq.*, 165 *sq.*; of youths, 170 *sq.*; of medicine-men, 175 *sq.*; at mourning, 8, 182 *sq.*
Scar-tattooing, 194 *sq.*
Schmidt, Max, on the origin of "geometrical" ornaments, 199 *sq.*
Schmidt, Pater W., on "culture centres" in South America, xxxi *sq.*; on "totem culture," 298
Scourging. See Lashing
Sea-god, worship of the, 350 *sq.*, 351 note 1
Sea-shells, offerings of, 383 *sqq.*
Seclusion, of girls at puberty, 11 *sq.*, 163, 165, 190, 192; of childbed women, 440, 443; of the father of a newborn child (couvade), 439 *sq.*, 449, 462 *sq.*; of mourners, 253, 474, 477; of manslayers, 160 note 5, 463
Self-decoration among savages, xxiv.
Self-mutilation as a mourning custom, 153 *sq.*, 186 *sqq.*
"Sense of shame," unknown to the savage, 141 *sqq.*
Serpent. See Anaconda
Sex, ascribed to animal spirits, 266, 285 *sq.*, 426; to plant spirits, 304, 307, 314 *sq.*, 419
Sham fights at wedding, magical character of, 167
Sheep, Peruvian (llama), sacredness ascribed to the, 267, 393; the animal most commonly sacrificed to the gods, 393 *sq.*
Sickness, mysterious, caused by sorcerers by means of invisible "arrows," 160, 367, 368, 370, 470, 471; by "demoniacal" animals, 285, 287, 293; by *chonta* thorns, 305
Silence, ceremonial, observed by the father lying in couvade, by girls at first menstruation, at drinking-bouts, by manslayers, 462 *sq.*
Sin, materialistic conception of, 486, 490, 492; confession of, 487 *sqq.*; disease and misfortune due to the commission of, 491; public calamity caused by, 492 *sqq.*; as a moral evil, 493 *sqq.*
Siusi (north-west Brazil), their burial customs, 32 *sq.*, 248; rattles used at dances, 128; walls of houses decorated with ornamental designs, 235; fasting after a death, 253, 475; couvade, 452
Skin, human, spirit or soul concentrated in the, 47, 70; of animals, 48; used as personal ornaments, 72 *sqq.*
Skinning of slain enemies, 70 *sq.*
Skull, flattening of the, 60 *sq.*; of slain enemy kept as a trophy, 69. See also Head
Snakes, superstitions in regard to venomous, 236, 287, 290 *sqq.*; "demoniacal," 291 *sq.*
Snake-patterns in ornamental art, 234 *sqq.*
Snuff-taking, ceremonial, 171
Soot used for blackening the face, magical properties ascribed to, 40, 191
Soul, concentrated in hair and head, nails and skin, 46 *sqq.*, 187, 202; in feathers of birds, 77; the name regarded as a vehicle for the, 203 *sqq.*, 417; deposited in external objects, 207 *sqq.*; identical with the shadow, 208 *sq.*; fate of the, after death, 416 *sq.*; return of the, through a natural birth, 420 *sqq.*; transferred from an animal body to the body of a woman by a mysterious conception, 425 *sq.*; transferred from plants, 427 *sqq.*; transferred

from inanimate objects, 432; directly transferred from the dead to the living, 433 *sq.*; of the father, intimately connected with the soul of his newborn child, 448; and *mana*, 501; origin of the conception of, 503 *sq.*; power, a quality of the, 504 *sq.*

Souls of the dead, believed to be reborn to a new earthly existence, 33 *sqq.*, 243; their continued existence believed to be dependent on the preservation of bodily remains, 33, 243; transmigration of the, into animals, ch. ix., 265 - 298; into trees and plants, 302, 304, 310, 311, 314, 325; into inanimate objects, 330, 331, 332, 334 *sq.*, 337, 338, 341 *sqq.*, 348, 349, 350, 354, 356, 357 *sq.*, 359, 360 *sq.*, 366, 372, 373 *sq.*; to be distinguished from the disease- and death-spirits, 183, 477 *sqq.*; possess *mana*, 502

Sowing and planting, ceremonies observed at, 315, 316

Spencer, H., on feather ornaments, 75, 76; on ceremonial mutilations, 154 note 2

Springs, offerings to, 383 *sqq.*

Starcke, C. N., on mother-right, 465

Stays of tree bast, 140; ornamented, 141, 233

Steinen, Carl von den, on body-painting among the Indians, 2 *sq.*; on the origin of tattooing, 189; on ornamental art, 200; on the masks of the Bakairi, 217; on the *meréschu*-pattern, 218; on pattern-painting among the Xingú tribes, 230, 239; on the belief in metempsychosis among the Xingú tribes, 277, 313; on the couvade, 445, 446, 452, 456, 461

Stinging chiefs with ants, 172

Stolpe, H., on the origin of ornamental patterns, 199

Stones, superstitious ideas about, 362 *sqq.*; among the Chaco tribes, 370 *sq.*; "Amazon-stones," 371

Sun, worship of the, in ancient Peru, 351 *sq.*; east of the Andes, 355 *sq.*; statue of the, 399

Supai hambi, "the devil's medicine," name used for the arrow-poison by the Quichua-speaking Canelos Indians, 327

Suyá (Rio Xingú, Brazil), nakedness of the women, 117

Symbolical capture of the bride, 167

Sympathetic magic, principles of, 201; connected with animism, 203; couvade based on, 447, 465, 466

Taboo, conception of, ch. xv., 468-497; definition of, 468 *sq.*; disease as a source of, 469 *sqq.*; death as a source of, 474 *sqq.*; blood as a source of, 481 *sqq.*; of menstruous women, 10 *sqq.*; of men-houses or flute-houses, 14 *sq.*, 231, 481; of mourners, 253, 474 *sqq.*; of masks, 14, 216, 429, 481; of flutes and bull-roarers, 14 *sq.*, 226, 309, 310, 311, 429, 481

Tapuyas (Guarani tribe in eastern Brazil), their feather ornaments, 83; piercing of the lip and the cheeks before marriage, 113; defloration of girls among the, 181

Tarahumara (Mexico), magical drinking-bouts of the, 312

Tattooing, 188 *sqq.*; scarification origin of, 189; among the Chaco tribes, 190 *sq.*; as a protection against disease, 191; of girls at first menstruation, 192; during pregnancy, *ibid.*; after the slaying of an enemy, 193 *sq.*

Taulipang (Arawak tribe in British Guiana), personification of plants among the, 324; rules of taboo prescribed for the relatives of the defunct, 476

Tecunas (Amazon, north-west Brazil), ceremonies performed with girls at puberty, 45; ligatures for the arms and the legs, 132; circumcision, 176; their belief in the transmigration of souls, 279

Teeth, blackening of, 6; knocking out of, 121; necklaces of human, 121 *sq.*; of wild animals, used as ornaments, 122 *sqq.*

Tembeta, the lip-button of the Guarani Indians, 109 *sq.*, 113

Theocracy of the Peruvians, 395, 493, 496

Theonomic morality of the Peruvians, 496

Thunder and lightning, animistic ideas about, 358 *sqq.*, 500

Tiger. See Jaguar

Tlascaltecs (Central America), their belief in the transmigration of souls, 119

Tlingits (Alaska), their belief in the rebirth of the departed, 420

Tobas (Argentine and Bolivian Gran Chaco), ceremonies performed with girls at puberty, 11; facial painting of women during menstruation, 13 *sq.*; their dances, 18; war painting, 30; mourning custom, 50; armours of tiger's skin, 73; ear-ornaments consisting of wooden plugs, 103; ceremonies at courting, 127; women at menstruation and childbirth attacked by evil spirits, 145 *sq.*; dancing as a means of curing disease, 166; cutting of nail as a mourning ceremony, 187; patterns painted on the face at mourning and at menstruation, 229 *sq.*; their belief in man-tigers, 268 *sq.*; called "Ostriches" by their neighbours, 271 *sq.*; meat of ostrich and armadillo ceremonially eaten at a feast, 272 *sq.*; avoid eating fish after a death, 292; their belief in spirits inhabiting lagoons, 349; fumigation with tobacco to cure disease, 382; custom of putting children to death, 446; superstition about the navel of the newborn child, 460; make a distinction between the souls of the dead and the death-spirits, 479

Totemism, founded on the doctrine of metempsychosis, 264, 297 *sq.*, 375, 414 *sqq.*, 435

Totems, animal, 281, 282 *sq.*, 297; plant, 307; of inanimate objects, 375

Toucan (*Rhamphastus*), clans named after the, 281; regarded as demoniacal birds, 286, 287

Transference of power, sacrifice based on the idea of, 377, 385, 398, 400, 404

Trees, believed to be animated by spirits, 302, 303 *sqq.*; sex ascribed to, 304, 307

Triangular figures as charms, 228

Trios (Carib tribe in Dutch Guiana), scarification of arms and legs, 189

Trumai (Rio Xingú, Brazil), waist-bindlets used by women, 150; custom of tying round the prepuce, 151

Tschudi, J. J. von, on the Indian belief in the rebirth of the dead, 33; on the Peruvian *huacas*, 339; on custom of sacrificing human blood to the earth among the mountain Indians of modern Peru, 407; on a festival of fertilization in ancient Peru, 431

Tukanos (north-west Brazil), girdle adorned with jaguars' teeth, 127; rattles of fruit shells used at dances, 128; endocannibalic feast, 434

Tupis (Guarani tribe in eastern Brazil), corpses of dead chiefs anointed with honey and coated with feathers, 32; give their dead the attitude of the fœtus in the mother's womb, 33; mode of interring their dead chiefs, 36; shaved off the hair of prisoners before killing them, 54; feather ornaments used by the medicine-men, 88; their feathered magical rattle-gourds (*maracas*), ceremonies at the killing of captives, 96; their feather ornaments, 99; magical "ornaments" presented to newborn children, 117 *sq.*; necklaces of the teeth of slain enemies; ceremonies with girls at puberty, 126, 163; anklets of dry fruits, 127; cotton cords tied round the waist and arms of girls at puberty, 136; dislike to wearing garments, 142; triangular basten coverings (*uluri*) of women, 149; tattooing of girls at puberty, 192; ceremonies with newborn children, 442; their custom of killing and eating the children of their captives, 446; fasting and seclusion of the manslayer, 160 note 6, 463

Tuyúka (north-west Brazil), their custom of piercing the ear-lobes, 105; ornamented apron worn at feasts, 151, 233

Twins, superstition about, 148, 178

Tylor, Sir E. B., on ceremonial mutilations, 154 note 2; on mutilations after a death, 187; on magic, 201 note 1; on couvade, 464

Uainumá (Rio Yapurá, north-west Brazil), clans named after animals and plants, 281

Uaupés (Rio Uaupés, north-west Brazil), ceremonies performed with girls at puberty, 165; flagellations at mystery-feasts, 171; hunting

charms, 211; snake-dance, 236; their "Great Spirit" Yurupary, 301, 307 *sqq.*; thunder ascribed to Yurupary, 361; Yurupary mysteries, 427 *sqq.*
Uitóto (Rio Putumayo, north-west Brazil), their "Supreme Being" Naimuéna, 301; their manioc-feast, 313
Uluri, triangular basten coverings of the Xingú tribes, 149 *sq.*, 227, 231, 233 *sq.*
Umauá (north-west Brazil), their ornamented waist-girdles, 140 *sq.*, 233

Viracocha, the Peruvian creator-god, 351, 397; sacrifices to, 385 *sq.*, 401; prayers to, 385, 400
Virgins of the Sun (*Mamacuna*), 396

Waist-clothes, magical, 149; ornamented, 232 *sqq.*
Wallace, A. R., on Yurupary, the "Great Spirit" of the Uaupés Indians, 307
Walls of houses, ornamental figures painted on, 234 *sq.*
Wapisiana (Arawak tribe in British Guiana), bleeding by means of crystals, 159; couvade, 458
War, body-painting for, 30 *sq.*; feather ornaments for, 93 *sqq.*
Warraus (Guaraunos) (Arawak tribe in British Guiana), hair of girls cut at puberty, 45; ornamented divining-stools, 238; burial custom, 251; couvade, 441
Warriors, secluded, 160 note 5, 463; taboo, 482 *sq.*
Wasps, sorcerers bewitch other people by means of, 293
Water spirits, ideas about, 348 *sqq.*
Westermarck, E., on self-decoration among savages, xxiv; on the tying of bands and rags in Morocco, 133 note 2; on the cords tied round the waist and arms of Tupi girls at puberty, 136; on the secondary character of savage sense of shame, 143; on covering as a sexual lure, *ibid.*; on mock capture of the bride, 168; on circumcision, 177 note 3; on sexual impulse and superstition, 196; on *l-ar*, magical sacrifice of the Moors, 377; on human sacrifices, 404, 405; on the sacrifices of the Guayaquil Indians, 407 *sq.*; on mother-right, 464 *sq.*
Whiffen, T., on anthropophagy, 33 note 2; on Indian superstition in regard to photographs, 209; on the breaking of clay vessels at burials, 246 *sq.*; on "magical" beasts, 288; on the Indian theory of the transmigration of souls, 295
Whips, magical, 169
Whirlwinds, spirits of the, expelled by ashes, 191 note 1; spirits of children supposed to travel in, 145
Whiskers of animals, used by sorcerer as bewitching "arrows," 285
Whistles, magical, 120; made of the bones of killed enemies, *ibid.*
Widows, ceremony performed with, before allowed to remarry, 184; hair of, cut, 43 *sq.*, 49; mutilated, 186
Witchcraft, Indian theory of, 160; practised by means of animal beings, 270 *sqq.*, 285 *sqq.*; by means of *chonta* thorns, 305; by means of crystals and other stones, 159, 366 *sq.*, 370; its connection with animism, 471 *sq.* See also Sickness
Woman, Indian, social position of, 14 *sqq.*; clay vessel supposed to be a, 247; not regarded as the bearer of the eggs, 423 *sq.*
Women, excluded from religious ceremonies, 14, 15, 231, 481; supposed to use less ornaments than the men, 16; feather ornaments seldom worn by, 17, 77; ceremonies performed at the menstruation of, 10 *sqq.*; more exposed to evil spirits than men, 10, 17, 50, 163, 443; active in the ceremonies performed with girls at puberty, 85; seldom decorated with animals' teeth, 126; some ornaments only worn by, 129, 131; their clothings, 143, 149 *sq.*; tattooed in Chaco, 190; religious instruments taboo to, 14, 15, 216, 481; souls of, believed to transmigrate into deer and owls, 285, 286; plants believed to have souls of, 304, 419; names of, 418, 419; called after plants and flowers, 417; after birds, fishes, and tree-fruits, 418; made pregnant without sexual intercourse, 145 *sq.*, 424, 425, 426 *sq.*; not allowed to prepare the food of man-slayers, 482

Wrestling, ceremonial, 166
Wundt, W., on pre-animistic hypothesis, 505

Xingú Indians (central Brazil), crescent-shaped ornaments made of the claws of the ant-eater, 107; jaguars' teeth used as breast-ornaments, 124; origin of tattooing among the, 189; supposed origin of animal patterns in the art of the, 199 *sq.*; masks, 217 *sq.*; decoration of the walls of houses, 234; their belief in the reincarnation of the dead in animals, 269. See also Bakaïri, Bororó, Suyá, Trumai

Yabahána (north-west Brazil), piercing of the ear-lobes, the septum of the nose, and the lower lip, 105 *sq.*; staffs of palm wood worn in the septum of the nose, 107; basten girdles and bands for the arms, 132
Yahúna (north-west Brazil), piercing of the ear-lobes, 105 *sq.*; scarification in disease and to strengthen the muscles, 158; their cultural hero Milomaki, 309
Yumánas (north Brazil), *jus primæ noctis*; naming of children, 418
Yuracáres (central Bolivia), pendants of glass beads worn in the ears, 106; ceremonies performed with girls at puberty, 163 *sq.*; scarification of boys at puberty, 170; superstitious practice at thunderstorms, 361
Yurupary, the "Great Spirit" of the Uaupés Indians, 301 *sq.*, 307 *sqq.*; mysteries of, 427 *sqq.*

Záparos (eastern Ecuador), their belief in man-tigers, 270

THE HISTORY OF CIVILIZATION

A COMPLETE HISTORY OF MANKIND FROM
PREHISTORIC TIMES TO THE PRESENT
DAY IN UPWARDS OF 200 VOLUMES
DESIGNED TO FORM A COMPLETE
LIBRARY OF SOCIAL EVOLUTION

Editor : C. K. OGDEN, of Magdalene College, Cambridge
Consulting American Editor : Professor HARRY ELMER BARNES.

A. PRE-HISTORY AND ANTIQUITY

I Introduction and Pre-History

*Social Organization	*W. H. R. Rivers*
The Earth Before History	*E. Perrier*
Prehistoric Man	*J. de Morgan*
*The Dawn of European Civilization	*V. Gordon Childe*
A Linguistic Introduction to History	*J. Vendryes*
A Geographical Introduction to History	*L. Febvre*
Race and History	*E. Pittard*
*The Aryans	*V. Gordon Childe*
From Tribe to Empire	*A. Moret*
*Woman's Place in Simple Societies	*J. L. Myers*
*Cycles in History	*J. L. Myers*
*The Diffusion of Culture	*G. Elliot Smith*
*The Migration of Symbols	*D. A. Mackenzie*

II The Early Empires

The Nile and Egyptian Civilization	*A. Moret*
*Colour Symbolism of Ancient Egypt	*D. A. Mackenzie*
The Mesopotamian Civilization	*L. Delaporte*
The Ægean Civilization	*G. Glotz*

III Greece

The Formation of the Greek People	*A. Jardé*
*Ancient Greece at Work	*G. Glotz*
The Religious Thought of Greece	*C. Sourdille*
The Art of Greece	*W. Deonna* and *A. de Ridder*
Greek Thought and the Scientific Spirit	*L. Robin*
The Greek City and its Institutions	*G. Glotz*
Macedonian Imperialism	*P. Jouguet*

* An asterisk denotes that the volume does *not* form part of the French collection, *L'Evolution de l'Humanité.*

IV Rome

Ancient Italy	*L. Homo*
The Roman Spirit in Religion, Thought, and Art	*A. Grenier*
Roman Political Institutions	*L. Homo*
Rome the Law-Giver	*J. Declareuil*
Ancient Economic Organization	*J. Toutain*
The Roman Empire	*V. Chapot*
*Ancient Rome at Work	*P. Louis*
The Celts	*H. Hubert*

V Beyond the Roman Empire

Germany and the Roman Empire	*H. Hubert*
Persia	*C. Huart*
Ancient China and Central Asia	*M. Granet*
*A Thousand Years of the Tartars	*E. H. Parker*
India	*(Ed.) S. Lévi*
*The Heroic Age of India	*N. K. Sidhanta*
*Caste and Race in India	*G. S. Ghurye*
*The Life of Buddha as Legend and History	*E. H. Thomas*

B. CHRISTIANITY AND THE MIDDLE AGES

I The Origins of Christianity

Israel and Judaism	*A. Lods*
Jesus and the Birth of Christianity	*C. Guignebert*
The Formation of the Church	*C. Guignebert*
The Advance of Christianity	*C. Guignebert*
*History and Literature of Christianity	*P. de Labriolle*

II The Break-up of the Empire

The Dissolution of the Western Empire	*F. Lot*
The Eastern Empire	*C. Diehl*
Charlemagne	*L. Halphen*
The Collapse of the Carlovingian Empire	*F. Lot*
The Origins of the Slavs	*(Ed.) P. Boyer*
*Popular Life in the East Roman Empire	*N. Baynes*
*The Northern Invaders	*B. S. Phillpotts*

III Religious Imperialism

Islam and Mahomet	*E. Doutté*
The Advance of Islam	*L. Barrau-Dihigo*
Christendom and the Crusades	*P. Alphandéry*
The Organization of the Church	*R. Genestal*

IV The Art of the Middle Ages

The Art of the Middle Ages	*P. Lorquet*
*The Papacy and the Arts	*E. Strong*

V Reconstitution of Monarchic Power

The Foundation of Modern Monarchies	*C. Petit-Dutaillis*
The Growth of Public Administration	*E. Meynial*
The Organization of Law	*E. Meynial*

VI Social and Economic Evolution

The Development of Rural and Town Life	*G. Bourgin*
Maritime Trade and the Merchant Gilds	*P. Boissonnade*
*Life and Work in Medieval Europe	*P. Boissonnade*
*The Life of Women in Medieval Times	*Eileen Power*
*Travel and Travellers of the Middle Ages	(*Ed.*) *A. P. Newton*

VII Intellectual Evolution

Education in the Middle Ages	*G. Huisman*
Philosophy in the Middle Ages	*E. Bréhier*
Science in the Middle Ages	*Abel Rey* and *P. Boutroux*

VIII From the Middle Ages to Modern Times

Nations of Western and Central Europe	*P. Lorquet*
Russians, Byzantines, and Mongols	(*Ed.*) *P. Boyer*
The Birth of the Book	*G. Renaudet*
*The Grandeur and Decline of Spain	*C. Hughes Hartmann*
*The Influence of Scandinavia on England	*M. E. Seaton*
*The Philosophy of Capitalism	*T. E. Gregory*
*The Prelude to the Machine Age	*D. Russell*
*Life and Work in Modern Europe	*G. Renard*

A special group of volumes will be devoted to

(1) Subject Histories

*The History of Medicine	*C. G. Cumston*
*The History of Money	*T. E. Gregory*
*The History of Costume	*M. Hiler*
*The History of Witchcraft	*M. Summers*
*The History of Taste	*J. Isaac*
*The History of Oriental Literature	*E. Powys Mathers*
*The History of Music	*Cecil Gray*

(2) Historical Ethnology

*The Ethnology of India	*T. C. Hodson*
*The Peoples of Asia	*L. H. Dudley Buxton*
*The Threshold of the Pacific	*C. E. Fox*
*The South American Indians	*Rafael Karsten*

In the Sections devoted to MODERN HISTORY the majority of titles will be announced later. Many volumes are, however, in active preparation, and of these the first to be published will be

*The Restoration Stage	*M. Summers*
*London Life in the Eighteenth Century	*M. Dorothy George*
*China and Europe in the Eighteenth Century	*A. Reichwein*

The *New York Times* calls this series "An adventure in letters and learning whose range is so audacious as to challenge the imagination to conceive it in its full implication. . . . A new type of vision on the whole perspective of historical science."

The *Chicago Evening Post*: "The scope is to be comprehensive and the performance so far has been brilliant. Mr. Knopf will have done the public an invaluable service by thus putting at its disposal an authoritative history of the world, entirely in English, each field covered by a man who has mastered it. . . . The History of Civilization ought to prove a force not only in the spread of knowledge, but in the propagation of international good-will."

James T. Shotwell writes: "The History of Civilization, edited by Mr. Ogden of Magdalene College, Cambridge, marks a new stage in the History of History. Hitherto we have had co-operative surveys of sections of European History, but they have all suffered from limitations of space. The various contributors have been obliged by the editors to put into a chapter material which ordinarily would call for a whole volume. This great History leaves the author a real freedom to cover his subject adequately, and once this is granted, the chief editorial problem is to secure the outstanding authority in the particular subject. The list of authors in this series could hardly be bettered. Each writer can bring a distinct contribution apart from the data with which he deals; each great phase of human evolution is presented here in a masterful survey and fits well into the general synthesis.

"Turning from the special volumes to the work as a whole, one finds a conception of history which corresponds to the demands of those interested in the social and intellectual development of Europe, while alongside of it the political story still furnishes the traditional framework. It is a living picture of a vast movement, splendidly conceived and sure to be adequately executed."

MENLO COLLEGE. BOWMAN LIBRARY
F2230.1.R3 K2 main
Karsten, Rafael/The civilization of the
3 4027 00022 8109